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THE MEMOIRS

OF

AN ARM-CHAIR.

Written by Himself.

EDITED BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET STOURTON," "THE MISSING SOVEREIGN," &c.

LONDON:
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And New Bond Street.
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THESE MEMOIRS

ARE

WITH MUCH AFFECTION AND RESPECT

DEDICATED TO

LADY L . . . .,

A VERY OLD FRIEND

OF

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

TO MY READERS.

THE following ſhort ſketch of my life, dear readers, is offered to your notice with much diffidence.

I am well aware that numbers of my brethren would be able to give you a far more intereſting and entertaining account of their tranſmigrations, adventures and viciſſitudes, than I have been able to do. Beſides which, I feel that as a writer my powers are very limited. Still, my editor has been kind enough to ſay, that my labours as an author ought not to be thrown away, and that it would, in her opinion, be folly to commit to the flames the MSS. which, at her ſuggeſtion, I now place in her hands for publication.

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I can only hope, therefore, that other "Arm-Chairs," may be ſtimulated by my example, to put forth more intereſting and better-written biographies, and if their contempt for my literary production encourages them to attempt ſomething of ſurpaſſing excellence, which ſhall ſucceed in throwing my work into complete ſhadow, why, I ſhall be the firſt to exclaim with yourſelves,

"*So much the better!*"

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THE

MEMOIRS OF AN ARM-CHAIR.

IT is, I believe, generally ſuppoſed that accounts of tranſmigrations, or transformations, ſuch for example, as thoſe related of Indur, of Puſs in Boots, The White Cat, &c. &c., are merely the fabulous creations of the imagination of the writers of thoſe remarkable hiſtories. With regard to my own ſtrange hiſtory it is far otherwiſe, for I have *really* undergone many and moſt curious changes, and many tranſmigrations, and I now intend to give a ſlight ſketch of my life, which has been a long one, and in my opinion a not unintereſting one.

From the moment of my firſt beholding the ſun, I was conſidered a moſt healthy ſpecimen. I ſay *I*, becauſe though I was only a part of the noble whole to which I

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belonged, all the parts were ſo amicably entwined that we always ſpoke of ourſelves in this particular perſon. For many years I continued to reſide in the ſame ſpot where I firſt ſaw the light. It was in the centre of a glade which ſtretched far to the right and left. In this charming ſpot nature reigned in all her lovelineſs. I formed one of a group which conſiſted principally of my own ſpecies, for we are a large and very ancient family, and have near relations in all parts of the kingdom. The glade already mentioned was one in which we much loved to dwell, and where ſome of the nobleſt and handſomeſt of us could be found. It was a charming abode, and when the ſun's rays enlivened the ſcenery and made us ſmile with pleaſure, we often watched with delight the deer coming trotting acroſs the open ground to ſeek the broad ſhadows beneath our green boughs. Oftentimes they would ſtop to drink at the cool ſtream that wound through the valley, and then repoſe under the ſpreading branches with which we were all ſo glorioufly crowned.

Here then I might almoſt ſay in perfect happineſs I could have wiſhed to ſpend my days; but who can expect to enjoy a ſtate of bliſsful repoſe all his life? It was deſtined to me to fare like the reſt of the world.

One bright day in October, when I was enjoying the breeze, which coming from the ſouth played about me in ſoft zephyrs, I heard the ſhrill blaſt of a hunting horn.

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Again it echoed through the dell, and a hart bounded paſt me, making a ſudden turn as he ſprang away. Then came a gallant ſhow of hunters, and among them rode Dudley Fitzclere, the youthful owner of the domain. I ſaw him on his jet black pony coming at full ſpeed towards me; then—alas! I felt a ſlight blow—the next moment Black Ankelin without his rider was ſeen daſhing down the chaſe, and Dudley in the arms of his attendants was carried bleeding away.

I fell into a fit of muſing upon what had juſt occurred, and I felt an odd kind of nervouſneſs creep over me, a ſenſation till then quite unknown to me, I knew not what to make of it, and then I began talking to myſelf.

"Alas! how ſoon has this ſcene changed. Many and many a time have I ſeen a hunt and without any accident. Year after year has the merry ſound of the horn echoed through my native glade. In one moment it ſeems, and that when leaſt expected, do the greateſt changes ſometimes take place." The greateſt changes—theſe three words ſeemed to faſten themſelves on my mind, and for the firſt time in my life I felt melancholy.

I continued thus out of ſpirits for ſeveral days, when one morning I ſaw Lincoln Green, the foreſter, coming towards me, and at a little diſtance I alſo obſerved a keeper named Andrew. They met cloſe to me, and immediately began to talk about Dudley, who it ſeemed

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was recovering. I thought Lincoln ſeemed very ſad, and at laſt Andrew aſked him what he was thinking about that made him ſo ſorrowful. "Why," ſaid he with a deep ſigh, as he fixed his eyes on my topmoſt bough, "this my favourite oak is to come down, becauſe it ſtands out from the reſt ſo dangerouſly and cauſed the fall of Mr. Dudley."

Reader, I well remember the thrill of horror which ruſhed from my loweſt root to the bough on which Lincoln Green had fixed his gaze. The two men moved away, and left me. To attempt to deſcribe the ſtate of my feelings would be uſeleſs.

As honeſt Lincoln turned to enter his cottage at the further end of the glade, I ſaw him take a ſad and lingering look at me, who had ſo long been his pride and his joy. I thought the dale had never looked ſo pretty as it did that evening. The ſtream which wound through it looked clearer and more ſparkling. The wind blew more ſoftly, and the ſunſet was more beautiful than it had ever been before. All around poſſeſſed a charm unknown till then, and as the ſummer twilight "wept itſelf away," the dew-drops ſeemed to be the tears nature was willing to ſhed over my griefs.

Early the next morning a number of men came down the glade, and I ſank into a ſtate of torpor which with us denotes an approaching tranſmigration. On awaking,

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judge of my ſurpriſe to find I conſiſted ſolely of—my heart, and that heart bore ſo little reſemblance to the heart of other days that I ſcarcely knew myſelf. I had been ſhaped into a very peculiar form. My back was ſtraight, and I had four legs and two arms, ſo I did not want for limbs; but they were of no uſe to me individually. I was now hoiſted into a waggon, and was ſoon rumbling and jolting along at a ſlow and moſt uneven pace.

It was late one night that I arrived at Fitzclere Caſtle. Where I had been ever ſince I left the glade, I'm ſure I don't know, but I know ſeveral years had paſſed ſince I was dwelling in that dear ever-to-be-remembered ſpot. Having arrived at the caſtle, I was next day placed in an ancient hall, then uſed as a withdrawing-room. The walls were hung with tapeſtry, and further adorned with pictures. I found two cabinets were on either ſide of me, which contained what I much admired, that is to ſay beautiful china and rare ſpecimens in coloured glaſs. I heard myſelf ſpoken of as "a chair," and I obſerved ſeveral more "chairs" ſtanding againſt the wall near a long maſſive table. Many were the grave debates I heard on ſtate affairs, when the hall was filled with grave, earneſt, elderly men, and eager young ones. The Fitzcleres were ſtaunch royaliſts, and a family of importance.

At the time of which I ſpeak, Oliver Cromwell was

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beginning to ſhow his power, and the royaliſts had ſuſtained ſeveral defeats. The young Dudley Fitzclere was to ſtart immediately to join the royal army. He was full of ardour for the fight, and ſeemed to enjoy the thought of the coming dangers; but his mother was very ſorrowful. Well do I remember the morning on which he entered the hall clad in military attire; the ſad parting that took place, the good wiſhes that were ſhowered upon him by the old ſervants; and then I ſaw him followed by about thirty men at arms, galloping acroſs the park, the ſun ſhining on their ſteel backs and breaſtplates.

It was reclining upon me that the Lady Fitzclere alſo watched her young ſoldier till he could be ſeen no longer. And then I heard her murmur the words which I had heard him ſay in a loud voice the night before, "For God, my country, and my king." The halls which had lately been ſo well filled were now ſolitary and melancholy, ſcarcely a ſerving man remained to wait on his lady, and the maids looked grave and frightened. I became the accuſtomed ſeat of the reverend old chaplain whoſe taſk it was to comfort and conſole the Lady Fitzclere.

One day the arrival of a meſſenger was announced. He was ordered to enter the hall in which I was. He proved to be a ſoldier in the diſguiſe of a countryman, and he had brought a ſealed packet from Dudley. The contents were evidently of a grave nature. I learnt, how-

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ever, from what paſſed that Dudley was ſafe, for the ſervants had crowded to the door, and the lady told them that although wounded in a battle in which he had nobly fought for his king and country, he was in no danger from his wound, but recovering faſt.

But this news was not all that the packet contained. The lady ſpoke to the chaplain of leaving the caſtle, of danger, and the neceſſity of eſcaping ſecretly. Very buſy ſhe was all that day, and during the following morning, I ſaw her carrying away papers and books, and other things which were, I ſuppoſe, of value. Some of the china and glaſs ornaments were taken out of the cabinets of which I have already ſpoken, and a picture of Dudley was carried paſt me by two ſervants, alſo his hunting-knife and hawking-gear, over which I fancied his mother ſhed a tear. Ah, when would her boy ride forth to his peaceful ſports again?

But where were all theſe things put? That I cannot tell you. They were carried away into ſome myſterious places into which I never went myſelf. I wondered they did not take me away too, but they appeared to forget all about me, ſtrange to ſay, and left me unheeded. Exactly in front of me, juſt behind the tapeſtry, or *arras*, as they called it, there was a very ſtrange piece of wall—it could be moved—and when it was moved, or rather puſhed aſide, you could ſee a little narrow flight of ſtairs, up

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which Lady Fitzclere went a great many times, taking things of value with her. But I think no one elſe excepting the chaplain knew of theſe ſtairs. He and Lady Fitzclere were always careful to cloſe the door of the hall before they opened the ſliding panel. Late in the afternoon of the ſecond day, Lady Fitzclere appeared in the hall in a riding dreſs, and the grave old chaplain was alſo there, not looking at all like himſelf, however, for to my great ſurpriſe, he was dreſſed in the livery of a groom. While they ſtood talking earneſtly together, waiting, I imagine, till their horſes were ready, a ſudden knocking at the door was followed by the haſty entrance of a ſervant, who looked the very picture of terror.

"Oh, my lady, my lady!" he exclaimed, "they are coming; horſe and foot, and—There! hark to the trumpets! The roundhead rebels be upon us! Oh, fly, my lady, fly!"

"Richard," ſaid Lady Fitzclere, to the terrified man, "go directly, and tell Sanders—" but ſhe did not finiſh the ſentence, ſeveral of the other ſervants came running in, and a great hubbub of voices and the clanking of arms could be diſtinctly heard without in the court.

The trumpets ſounded loudly, while a voice called on the inmates of the caſtle to come forth at once. Orders were ſhouted by their leaders to the ſoldiers, and the name of Lady Fitzclere was called ſeveral times.

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I was now in a terrible fright,—not for myſelf indeed, but for Lady Fitzclere and the chaplain. If my legs would but have ſtirred I ſhould have placed myſelf againſt the door, and no rebel ſhould have entered the hall until he had firſt cruſhed me to atoms, but I remained ſtolid and ſtill as the very caſtle walls themſelves.

"Oh, if my lady and you, reverend ſir, could but juſt be transformed into a couple of chairs, what a comfort it would be!" but ſcarcely had I breathed the thought when the tread of an armed heel ſounded cloſe at hand. There was no time to loſe. In an inſtant the ſliding panel was puſhed aſide, and Lady Fitzclere and the chaplain had diſappeared behind it. They had hardly cloſed it again, before a great broad-ſhouldered man in the uniform of a captain had entered the hall.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, looking round him, "So ho! the birds have flown, have they!" and then turning to ſome of his followers, he ſaid, "Yonder table ſhall groan for us beneath the good cheer with which that excellent larder through which I paſſed but now is ſo well ſupplied. Give orders to the lazy varlets in the kitchens to ceaſe wringing their hands, and ſet to work at once and prepare ſuch a ſupper as may be worthy of our attention, for if we don't eat ſhortly we ſhall ſtarve."

Having ſaid this, he looked round the hall, ſeemed to admire the armour and weapons with which the walls

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were furniſhed, and taking down a piſtol which hung above the mantel-ſhelf, he ſlung it round him, ſaying, it ſhould replace the one of which that young malignant Fitzclere had audaciouſly robbed him, "not but what I have good reaſon to think I ſpared him not a fitting return with my good ſword."

So ſaying,—(reader, I tried to ſtart aſide,)—he actually then and there ſuddenly flung himſelf into my arms, and fell aſleep. I ſuppoſe he was *very* tired, for he ſlept on while his junior officers were buſily engaged outſide, and while the noiſe made by the ſoldiers was very loud. They were calling to the ſervants of the caſtle for proviſions for their horſes and for drink for themſelves, and ſome were ſhouting orders to others, and the horſes were, I think, being unſaddled and picketed on the ſmooth graſs of the pleaſaunce. Little Dorice, a very pretty ſpaniel, belonging to Lady Fitzclere, had been dreadfully frightened by all the uproar ſucceeding the arrival of the rebel troops. She had hidden herſelf behind a cheſt at the further end of the hall. Poor little thing, I could ſee the point of her little brown noſe as ſhe lay panting there.

At length the ſupper was ready, and the diſhes were carried in by the Fitzclere ſervants, greatly, I fancy, to their diſguſt, for they looked as if they hated the work, —and no wonder. The good old butler's face was full

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of grief and anger. The officers inſiſted on his bringing ſome of the beſt wines the cellar contained, and placing them before their captain. I believe they made the old man do it by pointing piſtols at him, and threatening to ſhoot him if he refuſed. The captain liked me, he ſaid, ſo he drew me to the head of the table, thus making me the principal ſeat on that hateful occaſion. Oh, how I longed to tip myſelf up, and juſt turn him head over heels! I think the ſervants muſt have been very ſorry for me. Little Dorice, with her tail between her legs, came creeping out of her hiding-place when ſhe ſaw the butler, and a loud ſhout was raiſed by ſome of the rebels at the ſight of her, which made her fly like a little mad thing, and then the ſoldiers outſide gave chaſe after her, and I greatly feared they would catch her. However, I am happy to ſay I heard one of them mention afterwards that ſhe was "as ſharp at hiding, as her betters, and as difficult to catch as my lady herſelf." By which I knew that her ladyſhip was ſtill ſafe. The rebels did ample juſtice to the veniſon and other meats which were ſerved for them, and ſat carouſing till paſt nine o'clock, talking over the fortunes of the war and the events of the laſt battles in which they had been engaged. It was plain to me that the captain and Dudley Fitzclere had met in cloſe combat, for the captain ſpoke of a wound Dudley had given him, and of a ſword-thruſt which he had given

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Dudley. I was glad Lady Fitzclere could not hear all he ſaid of the tremendous force with which his ſword had fallen acroſs Dudley's ſhoulder.

At length the caſtle was ſtill again, the long ſhadows of evening had faded into the gloom of night, and ſave the tread of the ſentries who were poſted round the caſtle, and in the paſſages and galleries, nothing could be heard but the heavy ſnoring of ſleeping men. Some of them lay on the floor round me, on bundles of ſtraw which they had dragged in for the purpoſe of making themſelves temporary beds. The moon roſe very beautifully over the tops of the cedars and ſhone in at the great weſtern window, making the faces of the ſlumbering men look pale as alabaſter. All was ſtill, when ſuddenly I was much ſtartled by obſerving the arras on the oppoſite wall moving. Another moment, and a figure in white had ſtepped from behind it, and after a moment's pauſe a female figure paſſed cloſe to me, ſo cloſe as almoſt to bruſh againſt my right arm as ſhe haſtily, but with the ſtillneſs of a ſhadow paſſed among the repoſing figures to the great table upon which the remains of the ſupper had been left. She took up ſomething from the table, re-croſſed the room, and once more was loſt to view behind that moſt myſterious veil of tapeſtry before me. But, cloſe at my ſide lay a trooper who, I ſuppoſe, ſaw the unexpected apparition which had ſo much ſtartled me,

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for he raiſed himſelf ſlowly on his elbow, turned round, and remained a long time in the ſame poſition, breathing very quickly as though he had been ſuddenly terrified and aſtoniſhed in no ordinary degree. After a conſiderable time he was again overcome by ſleep, I ſuppoſe, for his head ſank down again, and he ſnored as before.

The next morning the ſtrange appearance of a white figure which noiſeleſſly moved from one end of the hall to the other, and vaniſhed through the wall, was talked of by the whole party. Moſt of them ſeemed inclined to the notion that Corporal Green had been dreaming. Some told him that he had had the nightmare, owing to the great ſupper he had devoured. The captain deſired to be ſhown the place in the wall where the ghoſt had vaniſhed. I was trembling for the reſult when I ſaw Green point to a place in the ſide of the room. The captain fired a bullet into it, and then decided that if the ſoldier did not catch the ghoſt next time it appeared, he would deſerve to be ſhot himſelf.

"It's all very well," remarked the corporal, "but I know I ſhall never believe my own eyes again, if they have told me falſe this time; and I won't ſleep another night in this haunted place. I'll ſtay awake all night, and then ſee if I don't catch the ghoſt, or whatever elſe it may be if it does come again, and then blue enough you will all look," he added to his fellow-troopers.

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The next night the men had again diſpoſed themſelves on the floor to ſleep, when I obſerved Corporal Green draw himſelf up againſt the wall, ſo as to ſit upright exactly oppoſite the place into which the captain's bullet had been fired. Hour followed hour, the great ancient clock in the tower ſtruck twelve, then one, then two; and Corporal Green rubbed his eyes hard, and ſtretched himſelf. But his head nodded lower and lower, and he ſlept. The arras moved, a figure moſt ſtrangely reſembling Lady Fitzclere again appeared in the pale moonlight, again glided acroſs the hall, took ſomething from the table, and had reached the arras behind which was the ſliding panel, when, ſtarting up with a loud ſhout, the corporal rouſed the whole party of ſleepers by his vehement aſſertions that he had again ſeen the very identical ghoſt of the evening before, enter the wall at the ſame point where it had diſappeared on the previous occaſion! It was droll to ſee the way the ſleepy ſtartled men looked about them; ſome did not underſtand what the corporal was talking of, and made moſt abſurd inquiries; ſome thought it was a call to arms, and ſeveral ruſhed vaguely to the windows, to look out and ſee if the houſe was ſurrounded by a royaliſt force I ſuppoſe. It was ſome minutes before the real cauſe of the diſturbance was explained, and then ſome were very angry at the falſe alarm; ſome wanted the corporal to explain more fully the appearance

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of the apparition, and ſome were for making an inſtant ſearch, while others ſaid the houſe was haunted by the ghoſts of malignants, and ought at once to be burnt or pulled down,—and they ſeemed inclined to carry their threats into effect without delay.

In the midſt of the ſquabbling, a trumpet ſounded ſhrilly at ſome diſtance, and inſtantly after another, juſt outſide, echoed the ſame call. Every man was on his feet in a moment, and then came the loud quick tones of the voices of the officers giving words of command, the rattling of arms, the hurrying footſteps of men preparing in hot haſte to obey the roll-call. All recollection of the ghoſt ſeemed to have vaniſhed as quickly as a lightning-flaſh, and very ſoon the hall was completely emptied of all its lately ſleeping inhabitants. But I fancy there had been ſome miſtake, for ere long I heard ſounds of laughter mingled with various exclamations of annoyance, and then ſeveral men returned into the hall again, and they fell to talking over the corporal's ghoſt ſtory, and they had decided that ſearch ſhould be made into every nook and corner in the morning, when a deep groan followed by a rattling of chains in the chimney juſt at my back made the men ſhiver with terror and turn deadly pale.

"What's that?" ſaid one, in a hoarſe whiſper. Again the rattling ſound, and another groan, and a great clatter as of ſomething falling. Before anyone could ſay ſo much

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as "Here comes the ghoſt!" helter-ſkelter with one ſimultaneous ruſh, knocking me right over in their deſperate haſte, (for which I did not thank them,) away went the men, and I never ſaw them again from that day.

I've no doubt the corporal was believed after this when he related his ghoſtly experiences. There I lay on my back on the floor, legs up in the air, and arms in as unnatural a poſition.

"Well, I think that fellow's ſhins are ſmarting a little," ſaid I to myſelf, "for they came pretty hard againſt me." I ſaw a grinning face looking in through the window. It was that of young Dick Verney, the ſteward's room boy, of whom I had often heard it ſaid, there was "no bit of miſchief that lad could not compaſs if he ſet his mind to it."

"Could he poſſibly have had a hand in cauſing the terrors which had driven my late comrades ſo ignominiouſly away?" thought I. I ſaw him go to the other end of the window and peep in. He was apparently much amuſed about ſomething. Whether my poſition, heels in air, ſtruck him as droll, or whether from ſome other cauſe, I could not feel ſure. While I lay thinking of this, I heard a very ſlight ſound, and what ſhould I ſee but the arras moving again! Then a head looked cautiouſly out, and then ſome one ſtepped into the hall,—ſlight and tall this figure was. Then came another

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figure, much ſtouter, and after pauſing and liſtening for a moment or two, both ſtepped on quickly to the ſmall door at the ſide, and vaniſhed.

"I may be miſtaken, certainly," ſaid I to myſelf, "but I have ſeldom ſeen two figures which bear a more ſtriking reſemblance to Lady Fitzclere and his reverence the chaplain."

I don't think anybody had any particular fancy to come into the hall after this. At all events, there I lay for a conſiderable time. The ſun roſe and ſet, night followed night, but I ſaw no more ghoſt, and I believe what I firſt took for diſtant groans was merely the ſnoring of heavy ſleepers. However, I cannot ſpeak with any confidence as to this. Very few of the ſoldiers remained in the houſe, and they kept themſelves at a diſtance from me. The only live creatures I ſaw were mice, who revelled in the collection of crumbs beneath the table. Two rats came ſhyly out one evening, and had mounted the table itſelf, when a monſtrous cat ſuddenly made his appearance, (for the door had been left on the latch,) and he ſent them pretty quickly to the right-about. The old cook had been in once to remove the meat, &c., which had been left on the table the night before the chains had rattled, but I ſuppoſe her mind was occupied too much for her to take any heed of me. She did not touch me, or even obſerve me, I think.

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How ſtill it was at night. The ſtars ſhone in the blue ſky, the tall trees waved in the ſighing breezes, but no longer did thoſe breezes play round me. My companions of old were no doubt ſtill ſtanding in the glade. What a ſtrangely different life to theirs was I leading. A man came in one day, and endeavoured to take me up on his ſhoulder, but finding I was a conſiderable weight, he called for aſſiſtance, and Dick Verney appeared.

"Here, you ſir," ſaid the man, "help me to take this chair into the kitchen; it is juſt the thing I want."

I ſaw Dick ſmile as he came towards me. Poſſibly he recollected the night on which he had ſo miſchievouſly cleared the hall by a trick. I fancy if it was his doing, it was not the only one he had played upon the uſurping inmates. The two men carried me into the kitchen where cooking was going on. I was placed near a window, and could ſee all that was done. The man who had been ſo condeſcending as to chooſe me for his ſpecial gratification, appeared to be a kind of well-to-do farmer, or elſe a merchant. I think from a converſation I heard, his houſe had been burnt down by the royaliſts in ſome night attack, and he having aſſiſted the rebels, they gave him permiſſion to occupy Fitzclere Caſtle. I think too there were ſtores belonging to the rebels concealed in the cellars which were left partly in his charge. About twenty men, ſome wounded and ſome ſuffering from ill-

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neſs, had been alſo left there, and a ſurgeon too. Altogether there were a good many people about the houſe.

Dick Verney uſed to look very demure, but I could ſee very well he took every opportunity of teazing Maſter Buzzwell, for that was the name of the gentleman who had cauſed me to be removed from the hall.

A long-faced man uſed often to come to ſee him, and bring news of the war, and he uſed to indulge in outrageous ſpeeches againſt the king, whom he accuſed of breaking the laws and all ſorts of crimes. One day Dick Verney, who had apparently been aſleep in a corner on a ſettle, turned round and aſked with the greateſt gravity whether it was not againſt the laws to talk treaſon of the king. Oh, you ſhould have ſeen the two men when they heard theſe words. They ſtared at Dick, and then at one another, and then at Dick again.

"Inſolent varlet!" ſaid Buzzwell.

"Thank you," ſaid Dick, "that's a poor anſwer to my queſtion though," and he left the room.

Then the two men laid their heads together about Dick, and I heard them decide that he ſhould be arreſted that very night, for a ſergeant and ſome troopers were to be at Fitzclere on their way ſomewhere in charge of ſeveral royaliſt priſoners, and Buzzwell ſaid he had long ſuſpected that Dick was a traitor, and now he felt no doubt about it. "Added to which," ſaid the long-faced

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man, "he has an inſolence of manner that is not to be borne."

An hour or ſo after, a little boy came in with a meſſage to "the two worſhipful gentlemen," as he ſaid. "Pleaſe your honour, I'm to tell you Maſter Verney is off to the wars, and he finds himſelf very well ſuited with the black nag Maſter Buzzwell had helped himſelf to ſo kindly, and he ſends his duty."

The boy looked greatly aſtoniſhed at the expreſſion his words called up on the countenances of Buzzwell and his friend. I was heartily glad my friend Dick was off, and I ſincerely hoped the merry fellow would paſs through the battlefield unſcathed. I thought, however, he would be ſure to fight like a young lion, and get into the very thick of any danger that came in the way.

Buzzwell's face got very red at the mention of his black nag,—whether he had taken it from its former owner by unfair means or no, I cannot ſay, but I think Dick muſt have meant ſome ſuch thing by the wording of his meſſage, ſo it ſtruck me at leaſt. A night or two before, I had been ſurpriſed by Dick's entrance with ſome piſtols and a great ſword, with which he nearly cut a bit of my head off, by the by; and he and the old cook had a myſterious talk, of which I could not overhear a word. I believe ſhe knew all about his plans, but ſhe kept them pretty ſecret. Of courſe being behind the ſcenes, as I

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may ſay, I was aware of a good deal that was concealed from other people.

When the ſergeant and the troopers arrived, Buzzwell told them what had happened, and how Maſter Dick had been a trifle too quick for him.

"Oh," ſaid the ſergeant, "then he was the youngſter who outwitted us but an hour or two ſince. As we were paſſing along the high road, I heard a ſhout, and looking up I ſpied a fellow on a fine black nag on the hill above. 'Who are you?' ſaid I. 'Dick Verney,' ſays he. 'Are you the troopers bound for Fitzclere Caſtle?' 'Yes,' ſaid I. 'Oh, all right,' ſays he, 'I'm exerciſing Maſter Buzzwell's nag, and I juſt went up on the hill to look out for you: are there any more beſides you coming?' ſays he. 'Yes, a few,' ſaid I, 'but they could not get on ſo faſt.' So then he aſks about the army and the garriſon at Crowborough, and when I'd told him, he gives a hearty laugh, and ſhouts, 'The king for ever!' and away he goes acroſs country like a mad fellow. Of courſe I thought at firſt you had ſent him out to meet us, or I ſhould never have told him what I did. We fired a few ſhots after him, but he had the hedge between him and us before he let us know what he was. They ſay Lady Fitzclere and her chaplain are in ſafety ſomewhere. How ever they got away is a marvel."

"Is it!" I heard the old cook murmur to herſelf, and

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ſhe ſcrewed up her mouth, and nodded her head. She was juſt behind the high-backed ſettle cloſe to me. Buzzwell and the ſergeant did not hear her; but I thought to myſelf, "you could tell theſe gentlemen one or two things they would mightily like to know! but they don't ſuſpect you, that's plain. What a numſkull that old Buzzwell is to be ſure."

After the rebels had poſſeſſed themſelves of every article of value they could lay hands on, they left the caſtle. I was ſold at the neighbouring town, together with a number of other articles, and I became the chief piece of furniture in the parlour of a republican orator, who frequently held forth to the multitude while ſtanding upon me. As he was no light weight and in the habit of ſtamping with great force when vehemently declaiming againſt the cauſe he hated, I was greatly delighted when a crack which ſuddenly took place in my right front leg, cauſed him to part with me as not ſuited to his vehemence. While I was being removed, I ſank into a ſtate of torpor, and awaked ſhortly after to find myſelf ſtanding in a market-place cloſe to the remains of the beautiful ſtone croſs which had adorned it, but which had been ſhamefully defaced by the Cromwellites, and was now a mournful monument of their love of deſtruction. "Well," thought I, "it's not for *me* to complain, though I *have* been ſomewhat ill-uſed. If that beautiful croſs

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has fared ſo much worſe than I have, I may rejoice that *I* am no worſe!"

The rain began to pour in torrents, and this did not improve the tempers of the byſtanders, I ſuppoſe, for there was a great deal of quarrelling and ſquabbling going on around me. I found a man was bargaining with my late maſter's houſekeeper about me.

"Old cracked thing," ſaid he, "I'll give you three ſilver pieces for it, and it is dear at the price."

At length having nearly exhauſted themſelves with arguing, it was agreed between them that I ſhould be ſold to the man for three-and-twopence, and I was ſoon after carried away by him. When he got me home, he mended my leg, (for he was a carpenter,) and congratulated himſelf upon his "luck," as he termed it. "I ſhall get ten ſhillings for you, I know," he ſaid, as he looked me over. So then he called to his daughter, and ordered her to rub me well with ſome wonderful compound which ſhe kept in a jar in a cupboard. "Don't leave off till you can ſee your face reflected in the poliſhed ſurface," he ſaid.

Such a round poliſhed face the girl had! I wondered if ſhe uſed the ſame ſtuff to rub it with as that which ſhe applied with ſuch good will to me. She called her father to look at me one day, and he ſeemed well pleaſed with my appearance as he turned me about and ſet me in the ſunlight to be better able to judge of my looks.

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"I ſhall take it to-morrow," he ſaid.

I felt uncommonly ſleepy and dreamy, but I had been ſtruck by thoſe laſt words, which quite rouſed me for a few minutes. "Then I am not to remain here any longer," thought I; "what is my deſtination, I wonder?" I continued to mutter to myſelf this query, till conſciouſneſs forſook me, and a complete lethargy ſucceeded.

Once more I came to myſelf, after ſome period of time had evidently elapſed. "That is not Phœbe, the girl with the round poliſhed face," thought I, as ſome one paſſed. I was but half awake, and not being exactly able to rub my eyes, it always takes me ſome little time completely to rouſe myſelf after one of my ſtates of ſomnambuliſm have prevailed. I did what I could to ſtretch myſelf, and made ſurpriſing groans and cracking ſounds in my joints and back. At laſt my ſenſes had ſufficiently regained their powers to enable me to give my attention to ſurrounding objects. It appeared to me that I ſaw nothing hitherto familiar. A ſound of footſteps caught my ears; ſome one was walking away farther and farther along a gallery or paſſage. As it was nearly dark, I could not ſee whether there were pictures hanging on the walls, but I thought the moonlight muſt have enabled me to ſee frames, if there had been gilt ones.

It was plain that I had awoke from my lethargy at

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night, and that the footſteps I had heard were thoſe of the laſt perſon up in the houſe, who was probably on the way to bed. I heard a door creak, and then a bang, as if ſome one was ſhutting it firmly; after that all was profoundly ſtill; the moon ſet, and perfect darkneſs ſucceeded.

I pondered over the days gone by. I thought of Dudley Fitzclere and his mother, and wondered what had become of them; I hoped they were in ſafety. I thought of Lincoln Green, and my native glade; I paſſed in review the various ſtrange ſcenes I had witneſſed, and now where was I? What ſhould I ſee when morning rouſed the inhabitants of this new home? Would they be old or young; handſome or ugly; people I had ſeen before, or people I had never ſeen?

I heard ſomething moving, the door was puſhed a tiny bit open, and the large eyes of a cat ſtared at me; then he prowled round the room, and went away again; it was too dark for me to ſee if I knew him. At length the twittering of birds announced the approach of dawn, and it was not very long before I heard the ſame creaking ſound I had obſerved the evening before, as of a door opening; this was followed by the ſound of footſteps, this time not retreating, but advancing.

For ſome conſiderable time I could hear theſe ſteps in different parts of the houſe, and at laſt they came nearer

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and nearer to the room I was in, and then the door was opened, and a woman appeared. With her came a large black cat, the largeſt I ever beheld; he came ſlowly towards me, ſtood waving his tale, and looking at me for a minute, and then ſpringing up, ſat bolt upright upon me while he watched the old woman's proceedings. She had a thick cloth in her hand and a broom, and with theſe ſhe proceeded to duſt and clean the room, and ſhe beſtowed particular attention upon me, which was a proof of her good ſenſe, I conſidered. She was a tall woman, and the thick ſhoes ſhe wore added to her apparent height; her ſtockings were of coarſe grey worſted; her gown, which was very ſhort, was made of a coarſe brown camlet, and ſhe wore a white handkerchief acroſs her ſhoulders; her hair was turned back under a curious little tight-fitting white cap, which had no border. She lighted the fire by bringing in from ſome other room a burning brand. The fireplace was a great broad open ſpace, where two or three people could ſit on either ſide in the chimney. All this time the cat ſat winking his eyes and watching her.

When all theſe arrangements were completed ſhe left the room, but Maſter Peter remained where he was. Preſently came a light ſtep down the gallery, and a young lady entered, oh, ſuch a nice face ſhe had. She carried a bird-cage in her hand in which was a linnet, and ſhe hung

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the cage on a nail near the window, then ſhe ſtroked Peter, who ſtood up and erected his tail ſtraight on end, and purred with all his might, and when ſhe left the room, he jumped lightly from his ſeat and went with her. When they came back again an old lady came alſo, and I then diſcovered that I was *her* chair.

I don't at all know whether I had been bought on purpoſe for her, but ſhe ſeemed to like me very much, and ſhe told Peter ſhe could not think of allowing him to make me his throne, but that he muſt content himſelf, while ſhe was in the room at all events, with one of the wooden ſtools; ſo looking up at her, and making a little tiny mew, he gravely took his place on a wooden ſtool as he was directed. Very ſoon, however, he laid himſelf down to ſleep before the fire, while the old lady read from a beautiful book which Brenda, her granddaughter, brought to her.

The houſe was evidently a very large one in which I now was dwelling, but it was almoſt uninhabited. There were indeed but five perſons living in it,—Lady Alice Wendover, her granddaughter Brenda, the maid ſervant, and two labouring men who worked on the farm near by. They were the ſons of an old ſteward of Lady Alice's, who had been ſlain in one of the firſt battles fought between King and Parliament.

It was a melancholy houſe for a young lady like

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Brenda, I thought. Her favourite companion was a very fine dog, who generally ſat at her feet while ſhe was ſpinning, looking up at her with his large eyes from time to time. Sometimes ſhe played on a ſweet little muſical inſtrument, and her grandmother was very fond of hearing the pretty muſic ſhe made.

I often had a great fancy to take a look at other parts of the houſe, but no one ever ſpoke of moving me, ſo I imagined I was never likely to do ſo. A very quiet, monotonous life we all led.

Brenda ſeemed to employ herſelf a good deal in ſtriving to make the old lady cheerful and comfortable; ſhe ſucceeded pretty well, and ſeemed in ſo doing to forget her own griefs in ſome degree. They had evidently been uſed to a different ſtyle of living; and I learnt ſome time after that the houſe belonged to the old lady's grandſon, who had been a very active ſupporter of the royal cauſe. He had left the country, and after ſuffering innumerable hardſhips and much ſorrow, his grandmother, the Lady Alice Wendover, and his ſiſter Brenda were once more permitted to occupy their own houſe—now in a ſadly dilapidated condition, owing to its having ſuffered ſo much in the wars.

One afternoon Brenda came running in with a bright look on her face, which made her grandmother ſay in quite a ſurpriſed tone of voice,

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"What now, my darling?"

"Mr. Saxby and little Maggie," replied Brenda, "they are in the kitchen, for they are very wet; I am going to put ſome dry things on Maggie, and as ſoon as Mr. Saxby's coat is dry, he will come in and ſee you, dear grandmother, if you will permit."

"Nay, I will go and ſee him at once," ſaid Lady Alice, and riſing with the help of Brenda, and leaning on her ſtick, the old lady left the room.

It was very evident to me that this arrival of Mr. Saxby gave great and unexpected pleaſure to the two ladies. It was pleaſant indeed to ſee from tone and manner how much this was the caſe.

"But who is he?" thought I. "Saxby? Saxby? Let me ſee now—is that a name I have ever heard before? No, I think not;" but I had obſerved on more than one occaſion that people did not always go by the names I had been uſed to hear them called by. In thoſe days they were obliged, owing to various circumſtances, to conceal their real names occaſionally, and I thought, perhaps, this had been the caſe with Mr. Saxby, and that when he entered I might ſee a man whoſe face was familiar to me, although his name was new.

My patience was well nigh exhauſted ere I heard approaching ſteps, and what is more, I was in great danger of being reduced to a cinder, for a large bit of wood

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which had lain acroſs two logs when Lady Alice went away with Brenda, ſuddenly fell forward in a blazing ſtate and rolled towards me.

I felt my left leg getting very hot indeed, and I was juſt about to exclaim, "It's all up with me!" when Brenda, followed by a little girl of about twelve years old, came in.

"Oh! oh dear!" cried Brenda, and ſeizing one end of the burning brand, ſhe flung it into the chimney.

"What a narrow eſcape," ſhe added; "but, Maggie darling, ſay nothing about it to my dear grandmother, for were ſhe to hear of ſuch an accident it would make her very nervous. It teaches me, however, to be more careful in future how I place logs on the hearth. How thankful I am we came in firſt."

Juſt then Lady Alice entered, ſhe had her ſtick in her right hand, her left hand reſted on the arm of a man whoſe appearance was that of a poor farmer, but the tone of his voice and manner of expreſſing himſelf was that of a gentleman. He was talking in low, earneſt tones. With great reſpect he placed Lady Alice in her chair, and bowing low to her, he took for his own ſeat one of the wooden ſtools which ſtood in the chimney corner. Brenda ſat on the other ſide with little Maggie at her feet. They had all been having ſupper in the kitchen, I believe, and now they had come to have a long talk over the fire in Lady Alice's ſitting-room.

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I liſtened with great attention, and I will here relate what I gathered from all I heard. I muſt firſt ſtate, however, that I had never ſeen Mr. Saxby before. I ſoon diſcovered that although he looked like a poor farmer, he was in reality a clergyman of the Church of England, and was one of thoſe who had been forcibly ejected from their livings. It ſeemed that he had loſt almoſt everything he poſſeſſed, and that he and his wife and children had been turned out late one night from their parſonage, and might have died of cold and hunger, had it not been for their maid-ſervant, who took them to her father's houſe, where they were hidden for a few days. The maid's father was afraid to keep them longer in his houſe, but he took them to his brother, who was a farmer living in an out-of-the-way part of the country, and whoſe wife had been many years ſervant to Mr. Saxby's father. There the outcaſt family appeared to have been moſt hoſpitably houſed. Mrs. Saxby ſpun wool, and Mr. Saxby worked with the farmer, and taught his own children and the farmer's three boys.

It ſeemed that the living from which Mr. Saxby had been ejected was very near the place I was now living in. Indeed it appeared to have been the very ſame pariſh, for Brenda talked of *our* church, and ſpoke of things that had been done in the church and village ſince Mr. Saxby left.

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He told them of Cromwell's proclamation, of which he ſaid he had heard the day before, and which prohibited all miniſters of the Church of England from preaching or teaching in any ſchools. He ſaid all devotion was now placed in hearing ſermons, while the Word of GOD and prayer were ſadly neglected, ſo that the people were becoming puffed up with pride, and full of ignorance of the commoneſt doctrines of Chriſtianity.

"We ſee now," ſaid he, "what theſe Diſſenters really deſire. It is not only to have their own way as regards themſelves, but like true tyrants, to force others to adopt their practices."

"Yes," ſaid Lady Alice, "and this is the very thing they denounce as error in the Romaniſts. Poor men, how deluded they are; we muſt pity them."

And ſo they talked on, lamenting the ſad changes that had taken place in the land, and relating many grievous hiſtories of hard uſage and privation.

Lady Alice ſpoke of the man who now called himſelf miniſter of the pariſh, and who had been placed by the commiſſioners in the parſonage from which Mr. Saxby had been turned out. He was no real clergyman it ſeemed, but ſome kind of Diſſenter. There were ſo many varieties of opinion amongſt them, that it was difficult to ſay of what denomination he was.

He had been a maltſter, but fancying himſelf to have a

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great gift for preaching he left his trade and took to preaching inſtead. Although a moſt ignorant uneducated man he fancied becauſe he could talk by the hour together without a pauſe, that he was conſequently fitted to teach. He had denounced Mr. Saxby before the commiſſioners, and ſaid what I ſuppoſe was quite true, that "Saxby was an inveterate and moſt determined oppoſer of the new doctrines and a moſt ſtrenuous upholder of the doctrines of the Church of England." How it happened I don't know, but the end was that Mr. Saxby was pronounced incorrigible, and on the very day after he was turned out of his pretty home, Mr. Burning-with-Zeal Tomkins, (for ſo the maltſter was called,) with his wife and half-a-dozen children turned into it!

Brenda told Mr. Saxby that Tomkins had knocked out a good deal of the ſtained glaſs from the Church windows and that ſhe had managed to collect ſome of it unknown to him, which ſhe had buried in a ſafe place in the garden, with ſome pieces of carved woodwork which had alſo been mutilated.

Little Maggie was Lady Alice's godchild, I diſcovered, and it was on this account that her father brought her with him I think.

The next day was Sunday, and to my ſurpriſe I was on that morning removed to another room in a different part of the houſe, ſo I had my curioſity to ſee more of it grati-

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fied. It was a curious kind of place to which I was taken. It was without furniture, excepting ſome few ſtools and ſeveral logs of wood which were arranged at one end near a table. While wondering what all this could mean, the maidſervant came in, and Brenda and Maggie with her: Brenda carried two books, which ſhe placed on a ſmall table, and ſhe directed that I ſhould be placed by this table.

By-and-by two or three people came in and took their places on the logs of wood and ſtools, and then Lady Alice came in, and laſt of all Mr. Saxby. And now perhaps my readers will gueſs that we were in an apartment which had once been fitted up as a chapel, but which had, I imagine, been diſmantled by the Puritans, and Mr. Saxby was now ſecretly performing the ſervice of the Church in this place for the benefit of a few of his old pariſhioners who had met together unknown to their enemies. In the afternoon of that day Lady Alice heard little Maggie ſay her catechiſm. The child looked ſo good and pretty ſtanding before the old lady with her hands folded together. She ſaid the whole of the catechiſm without a ſingle fault, for which her godmother praiſed her. Maggie looked ſhy but pleaſed at this.

Mr. Saxby and little Maggie only ſtayed two nights with us. Lady Alice and Brenda were very ſorry to part with them. I was ſorry too, for Maggie was ſuch a nice

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little girl that I did not mind her ſtanding upon me to look into the linnet's cage, though I confeſs the ſhoes ſhe wore ſcratched me rather.

The houſe was very lonely. It ſtood in a large park, which was thickly wooded, and on three ſides the ground roſe ſo that the view was intercepted from the windows. One evening when the wind had been blowing in ſtormy guſts, and the rain pouring down the wide chimney, hiſſing and ſputtering on the huge log of wood, which with ſome difficulty the old maidſervant had placed acroſs the "dogs," Brenda left her ſpinning-wheel and went to the window. I ſaw her with her chin reſting on her hands, gazing up at the moon, which was now riding glorioufly in the deep blue vault of heaven, while denſe maſſes of cloud ſeemed to open a way for their queen to paſs on her ſtarry road. The wind ſtill moaned through the long paſſages, but all elſe was ſtill. Suddenly I thought I heard a ſound outſide like a human voice. Brenda, however, did not appear to notice it, and ſhe left the window and returned to ſit by her grandmother and ſing her evening hymn to her.

Again I heard a voice calling gently, and a ſhadow darkened the window for one moment. Brenda roſe from her ſeat, and flew to open the caſement uttering a joyful exclamation of ſurpriſe and delight, and then ſhe left the room, but ſoon returned bringing with her a tall

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man who was apparently almoſt exhauſted with fatigue. He knelt on one knee before the Lady Alice, who was overcome with joy at ſeeing him once more, at leaſt ſo I thought from her manner, and the few words ſhe uttered as ſhe took his hand in both her own and kiſſed his white forehead. The reſt of his face was brown enough, but his forehead retained its original fairneſs, and was ſhaded by dark brown curling hair. As quickly as poſſible the fire was made to blaze high, ſhedding light and warmth around, and Brenda ſet before Sir Rupert all the cheer ſhe had in the houſe. Sir Rupert was her brother, long had he lived away from his native land, and now pennileſs and in diſguiſe he had returned to ſee his own dear home, his grandmother, and his ſiſter, once more. His faithful hound knew him inſtantly, but ſhe had grown deaf from age, and therefore had not recogniſed his voice when he ſpoke beneath the window.

Sir Rupert remained in the houſe many days, for he was ill, added to which he ſcarcely dared to venture out. One day, however, he did ſo, and returned with the great news that Oliver Cromwell was dead. It was then that he carved on me the date which as you ſee I bear,—1658. He went immediately after this to London accompanied by his ſiſter and Lady Alice, and when they returned again great indeed were the changes which took place in my home, for "Sir Rupert had come to his

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own again," and oh how happy was the Lady Brenda his ſiſter!

For a ſhort time I was placed in the little antechamber, through which all who went into the withdrawing-room had to paſs. Many gallants and noble dames I ſaw, and many were the earneſt converſations on public affairs that I overheard. After awhile affairs of State were ſettled in a manner that gave the greateſt poſſible ſatisfaction to thoſe about me, and great public rejoicings were the conſequence, for King Charles the Second had been enthuſiaſtically welcomed by the whole country, and the old halls of my reſting-place echoed with rejoicings, ſongs, and merriment. It was ſcarcely poſſible to recogniſe the ſtately withdrawing-room, now hung once more with tapeſtry, and adorned with furniture, as the ſame room it had been a few months before. I don't know how it was all managed, or who paid for the various articles which arrived and were diſpoſed according to their fancy by Sir Rupert and Brenda; but benches, chairs, tables, and hangings began to give a general appearance of warmth and comfort which was quite cheering to my ſpirits. Then the voices of Brenda's companions too were moſt grateful to my organs of hearing. Brenda's voice was the prettieſt of all though; and when ſhe ſang, oh, how ſweet and gay were the tones which had been ſo ſad erewhile.

I had been puſhed ſomewhat unceremoniouſly into the

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deep embraſure of a window one day by an impertinent youngſter of a carpenter's boy, and was wondering how long I ſhould remain jammed up there, when my attention was arreſted by a ſcene on the terrace below.

A gentleman in a handſome riding ſuit, with a hat adorned by a beautiful feather, was walking between two young ladies, one of them I ſaw was Brenda. The Lady Alice was ſeated on a bench beneath the ſhadow of a tree at a ſhort diſtance, and a group of young people ſtood near her. Theſe ſoon diſperſed, and then the gallant already mentioned, having apparently ended his converſation with the young ladies, walked towards Lady Alice, raiſing his hat from his head as he did ſo, and bowing profoundly when ſhe gave him her hand, which he kiſſed. At that moment a couple of grooms on horſeback, and two men leading a noble cheſnut appeared in ſight at the end of the terrace.

The two young ladies with their arms entwined, ſtood beneath the window in which I was placed, and were, I think, talking of the beautiful horſe. The gentleman having ended his leave-taking with Lady Alice, returned to the young ladies, and they accompanied him down the terrace towards the horſes, and Brenda I ſaw ſtroked the neck of the beautiful cheſnut, but her companion ſhook back her curls merrily, and would not venture to do the ſame. Upon which I obſerved that Sir Rupert ſpoke to

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her, ſome jeſt it was I think, for ſhe laughed and turned with a haſty movement from him as though deprecating what he had ſaid. Brenda meantime ſtroked the cheſnut with a thoughtful gravity, quite unlike her companion's lighthearted way of treating him to whom *her* attentions were dedicated at the moment.

"And now to horſe." The noble gentleman ſprang into his ſaddle, and waving his hat, and bending low, bade adieu to his fair companions, a bright ſmile for one, a look of deeper intereſt for the other.

The merrieſt of the girls put her arm round her friend, and whiſpered ſomething in her ear, and then the two having watched the gallant rider for a few minutes, returned to the Lady Alice, and ſoon re-entered the houſe.

About an hour after, Brenda came into the very window in which I was. She ſtood there a little while, ſhe ſeemed to be thinking; ſhe did not notice me; odd enough that was, I thought, conſidering that I was puſhed up in ſuch a ſtrange manner againſt the wall, and all on one ſide I was too, my left legs being quite off the ground. Well, there ſhe ſtood till I was quite provoked. I was quite tired of ſeeing her looking out of the window thinking of nothing apparently. She gave a ſtart which ſhook me, and ſuch a bright colour came into her face when her friend's voice ſaid, "Are you, or are you not, going to ceaſe dwelling on yon cheſnut's perfections?" Having

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ſaid which, ſhe threw herſelf upon *me*, giving an abſurd ſhriek, as with a groan of no ordinary hideouſneſs, her weight righted me, and brought me ſuddenly on all fours, (that is, I mean, brought me firmly on my four legs.) Then both the young ladies laughed and teaſed each other unmercifully for ten minutes or ſo, and then talked with ſome approach to ſenſe in their converſation for about half an hour, and then ran away.

But this was by no means the only occaſion on which Brenda came into that deep window. I continued there (but in a proper poſition from that time), and as ſhe was very fond of me, ſhe often reclined upon me. She even went ſo far as to rub the duſt off me with her own fair hands and her own handkerchief on one occaſion, a condeſcenſion which I am ſure I ſhall never forget.

One day as ſhe and I were by the window together, and her little birds were ſinging in the cage which hung juſt outſide, ſhe looked up quickly, while an expreſſion of pleaſure, which was followed by one of earneſt thoughtfulneſs, croſſed her fair young face. She waited a few minutes, and then left me, and I heard her light ſtep running along the gallery.

An hour after there paſſed me Lady Alice, Brenda, and the ſame noble gentleman who had ridden away on that beautiful cheſnut. He carried his plumed hat in his hand, and his dark hair fell in curls over his ſhoulders.

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He was ſpeaking to Lady Alice, but his eyes reſted upon Brenda; ſhe however did not ſeem to notice this, her eyes were caſt down ſomewhat. They pauſed as they approached me, and then advanced towards the window.

"How pleaſant the ſunſhine is in this oriel," ſaid the gentleman. "Is this your favourite bower?" he aſked of Brenda; "I ſee you have your doves and linnets for companions."

"Brenda has a tender heart," ſaid Lady Alice, kindly, "ſhe loves her pets, and they love her."

"'Twould be out of nature if they did not ſo," ſaid the gentleman, but he ſaid it rather low, and as Brenda was engaged in prevailing upon one of her birds to reſt on her finger, and not heed the preſence of a ſtranger, perhaps ſhe was too much occupied to notice his words, which I thought were prettily ſpoken, and contained much truth.

"There, ſweet birdie, that is right," ſaid Brenda; "you have nought to fear; now then, ſing to us."

The little bird moved his head from ſide to ſide, eyed the ſtranger aſkance, but then ſeeming ſatisfied, opened his little beak, and ſang moſt ſweet notes, while Brenda watched him with a ſmile juſt parting her lips, but the ſtranger watched her. And when the bird had finiſhed his ſong, ſhe looked up at the gentleman, not expecting, I fancy, to meet that earneſt gaze which ſhe thought had

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been fixed on her pet. The bright colour glowed on her cheek, and ſhe ſpoke not the words which trembled on her lips the moment before.

A ſervant now approached to ſay refreſhments were ſerved in the red parlour, and Lady Alice ſaid ſhe hoped the ſtranger would partake of ſome with them. He heſitated at firſt, but ſeemed unable to find a good reaſon for refuſing; they left me to proceed to the red parlour, I ſuppoſe.

I did not hear the gentleman's ſurname for a long time. He was always called Sir Dudley, a name not unfamiliar to me, as I ever kept young Dudley Fitzclere in remembrance; but it never ſtruck me till ſome time after that this was the very ſame Dudley whom I had ſeen ride away from his caſtle to join the army ſome ten years before, for he was ſo changed in appearance from the beardleſs boy of thoſe days, that I did not recogniſe him in the leaſt.

Bright and happy days were Brenda's now. It was evident that Sir Dudley and ſhe were exactly ſuited to one another, and I rejoiced to think they were to be united. But I had arrived too ſoon at this concluſion I found; ſomething went wrong, I know not what, but gloomy days ſucceeded, and ſorrow took the place of joy. Weeks, nay months paſſed, and no Sir Dudley came. I rather think he and Rupert muſt have quarrelled, for

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Rupert never mentioned him when he came back, and he looked grave, and I thought he ſeemed angry and worried. I think Lady Alice interceded with him for his ſiſter, but to no purpoſe. Once I heard high words between Rupert and a young man who was, I believe, a friend of Sir Dudley's, and who took his leave haſtily without civil words of parting.

And now tears, blinding tears, ſometimes fell upon my arm, for Brenda would ſit with her arm reſting upon me, and her head bent over me. I was her friend, ſhe truſted me with her ſecrets, ſhe murmured words none other could hear when ſhe ſat with me in what the ſtranger had called "her bower." Yes, it was as I thought, there was a miſunderſtanding of the graveſt nature between her brother and him who ſhould have been her huſband; and had he forgotten her? She told me he had, but I doubt if ſhe really thought ſo.

It was evening,—Brenda and I were alone, when a tiny pebble ſtruck the window pane—another—and ſhe haſtily roſe and looked forth, ſomething was thrown up, which ſhe caught. It was a piece of paper tied to a little ſtone; with a beating heart ſhe read ſome words contained in the paper, and then bending her head over me, ſhe told me ſhe had been wrong, very, very wrong, for ſhe had doubted one who was true as ſteel. Some months paſſed, but though often ſad, hope and truſt dwelt in that

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young heart, and in her ſweet expreſſion and manner it could be traced, but I knew it from another ſource, even from her own mouth. To me her ſecrets were confided.

It was ſome time after this that the clanking of ſpurs announced the preſence of men in the gallery. Sir Rupert's voice I heard, he ſpoke in cheerful tones.

"We ſhall find her in her bower, perhaps," he ſaid, "or if not, in the parlour with my grandmother."

They came nearer, and not finding her they ſought, they paſſed on. It was Sir Rupert and Sir Dudley,—and they looked like friends.

An hour after, Sir Dudley and Brenda were with me in the oriel, and if they were as happy to be together as I was to ſee them there, they were by no means to be pitied. Oh, it was pleaſant to ſee them.

As I am neither romantic nor ſentimental, I cannot write of them as the occaſion required, ſo I ſhall ſay no more, but leave it to thoſe poſſeſſed of theſe qualifications to imagine how the time paſſed till the marriage took place of thoſe two ſo very dear to me. I could have wept to think I was to loſe them, and I creaked, and groaned, and gave ſudden cracks, (which are with me equivalent to ſighs.) But happy days were in ſtore for me too, as I afterwards found.

It was in conſequence of the marriage of Dudley and Brenda that I was again removed, for Brenda ſaid that as

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I had been ſo long in the little room with her grandmother and herſelf, when ſorrow darkened their days; it was but fair that I ſhould ſhare the bright ones now dawning on her.

I was placed in the entrance hall of Fitzclere Caſtle, whence I could look down my own glade, which was but half-a-mile off, and my delight at feeling the breezes which came ſweeping up from that dear home of my earlieſt days to welcome me, I fancied, as they played round the ancient walls which ſheltered me was more intenſe than words can ſay. The Lady Brenda often came into the hall and ſtood in the window, near which I alſo ſtood, for the view was very lovely from thence, and there ſhe would watch her Lord riding out to hunt or hawk. I was always pleaſed when ſhe was near. I loved her ſweet face moſt ſincerely. And now I had once more the great pleaſure of ſeeing Lady Fitzclere, and what, oh reader, is the uſe of my attempting to deſcribe my delight, when firſt ſhe looked at me, came nearer, walked round me, ſearched for a particular mark like a dark ſtain I have on my arm, and finally exclaimed, that ſhe "knew me again as the very chair ſhe ſo often had uſed long long ago." Really ſhe ſeemed quite delighted to have me again.

"My good old friend," ſhe ſaid, and it may ſeem hard to believe, but poſitively I ſaw tears in her eyes as ſhe

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ſtood a yard or two from where I was, and gazed fondly at me. Poſſibly my preſence recalled many ſcenes of the paſt to her mind. It may have been ſo. I will ſay no more. I only know I was deeply touched. And with what true intereſt did Dudley and Brenda liſten while ſhe told them about me! They ſaid how curious it was that I ſhould firſt have belonged to Fitzclere Caſtle, and then have been an inmate of Brenda's home. I had belonged to Dudley and Brenda ſeparately; now, I belonged to them both, but *ſeparately* no longer!

From that moment, I was an object of ſpecial care and intereſt, and was often pointed out as worthy of peculiar attention to perſons who came to the caſtle. Dudley had quickly recogniſed me after his mother told him ſhe knew me again, but he was ſo altered that I ſhould ſcarcely have known that fine ſtalwart man as the boy of yore.

I muſt on no account omit to mention Dick Verney, who appeared to me to be the greateſt man in the houſe next to his maſter. Half-a-dozen ſcars had ſomewhat marred his original beauty,—which, to ſay truth, never was great,—but far from regretting the damage done, Dick ſeemed to take a peculiar pride in himſelf in conſequence.

"You've been in the wars, too," ſaid he to me one day. "I'll warrant you were as plucky as your maſter!

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not to mention a certain humble ſervant of his, whoſe name I *could* ſtate. That ſame good ſword which left its mark on you by accident before we parted, old friend, left a few more marks before it came home again."

Sir Dudley Fitzclere gave a grand entertainment to his tenantry ſoon after the birth of his ſon and heir, and I was of courſe moved into the hall on the occaſion. That very hall where I had officiated at the head of the table when the Roundheads took poſſeſſion of the Caſtle.

I was ſo very glad to ſee it again; although ſome of the armour and moſt of the weapons which had adorned it before that had been removed by the rebels, the hall preſented a very noble appearance. There were flags which had figured in ſome of the late engagements, and helmets and ſwords there were in goodly array. A band of muſicians occupied an open gallery at one end, and played their very beſt, on cornets, horns, kettle-drums, cymbals, &c. Plenty of ladies in gay attire, too, there were, who entered the hall in a ſort of proceſſion, with Lady Fitzclere, and were greeted with loud cheering from the aſſembly. Then came drinking of healths and merry-making, and ſuch cheers as made the very rafters of the hall ring again. Jovial fellows ſome of the ſquires were, and right hearty was the welcome which Dudley gave to every one. He told them he had not much gold or ſilver plate wherewith to adorn the ſideboard, for it had

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been melted down, and coined into money, long ago, to aſſiſt the royal cauſe. Whereupon, another tremendous cheer aroſe, and "Long live the King!" was ſhouted on all ſides.

Then the baby was brought to the front of the gallery, and ſhown to the gueſts, and I thought he muſt have nerves and courage equal to his father's, for inſtead of crying at all the noiſe, they all ſaid he was laughing. One man ſtood upon me to get a nearer view of him, and I heard him ſay, "He's as fat as a young pig, bleſs him!"

"Holloa! mind how you get down," ſaid I, "you have ſcraped me well, to be ſure, with your great iron-clouted ſhoes."

When he ſaw the marks, he took out his pocket-handkerchief, and gave me a bit of a wipe over. However, as it was all through his zeal for the heir of Fitzclere, I forgave him.

A fine little fellow was the little heir. He was named Sackville Dudley. I remember him when he was about four years old very well. How often he uſed to gallop up and down the hall riding acroſs a ſtick of his father's, and then he uſed to call me his coach and have half-a-dozen big logs of wood for the horſes, and he would drive to "great London town," and go, he would ſay, to ſee his father, who was gone to London to attend the ſitting of parliament. His mother let him ſtay up to ſupper the

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night Sir Dudley came home, and his father gave him a cup of ſack poſſet to drink, over which he made a face as though it had been phyſic! "And a good thing too," thought I, "you won't take too much at that rate."

Reader, I am now going to give you a ſhort ſketch of my next tranſmigration.

Many years had rolled by when on awaking I found myſelf in a different ſort of place from any I had been in before. I was in a parlour where everything around me was arranged in the moſt ſevere order poſſible. If I may ſo expreſs it an *intenſe primneſs* prevailed; enough I am ſure to frighten any vagrant particle of duſt which had unwittingly ſailed in on a breath of air through the key-hole, and this no doubt accounted for the abſence of that cuſtomary intruder. Over the middle of the floor of this parlour was ſpread a ſmall bright carpet, and in the centre of this ſtood a table poliſhed like glaſs, upon which were placed ſome handſome china bowls and japan ornaments.

Nearly the whole length of one ſide of the room was occupied by a harpſicord, and an Indian cabinet ſtood oppoſite me. A ſmall bookcaſe filled with books and china ornaments was in one corner, and a Chineſe ſcreen was its *vis-à-vis*.

A chair covered with horſehair and ſtudded with braſs nails ſtood on one ſide of the fireplace, and two in black

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and gold with ſatin damaſk cuſhions, had places in the windows.

"I wonder who owns all this reſpectability," ſaid I to myſelf, as I ſurveyed my new abode, and I wonder how many years it took to bring this floor upon which I am now ſtanding to ſo fine a poliſh. Plenty of bees-wax has been expended on theſe boards. I hope they will kindly extend their liberality in bees-wax and dry rubbing to *me*, for I feel quite unfit for ſuch a parlour. What on earth made them put me here without firſt improving my outward appearance a little?"

Then came the comforting thought, that true worth has intrinſic merits. I was juſt reflecting on this when there paſſed the window a number of young ladies walking two and two together; theſe were followed by ſome more who were ſeveral years older than the firſt ſet, and the latter portion of the proceſſion were all as ſtiff and upright as ſo many pokers.

"Now who and what are all thoſe!" thought I. "I ſhould very much like to know."

A few minutes after I was aware of ſounds in an adjoining apartment, and ſhortly after this I diſtinguiſhed various voices, apparently engaged in repeating leſſons in foreign languages and poetry, for the door being a tiny bit open I could without difficulty diſtinguiſh many words. After ſome conſiderable time, I heard the words, "Miſs

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Belinda's time for the converſational leſſon." Theſe were followed by the reſponſe from a young voice of, "Yes, ma'am," and in came two perſons,—an elderly lady, and a girl of fifteen, with a pair of merry dark eyes. The older lady's dreſs I will not attempt to deſcribe, but perhaps my readers may be intereſted to hear a deſcription of that of the younger. She wore a white frock, with a broad blue ſilk ſaſh, and blue ſhoes with high heels, and her hair which was very dark hung down her back in curls, while a little white cap was tied by a blue ribbon round her head. This was quite a different ſtyle of dreſs to any I had ſeen before.

"Now then, Miſs Belinda," ſaid the elderly lady, (who by the by, was as upright as a poker,) "take your fan, and commence your converſation."

"But which chair ſhall I talk to, madam?" replied Belinda.

"That one," replied the lady, pointing to me. "A new chair may call forth new ideas, perhaps, and therefore I have ſubſtituted this one for the one to which you had been accuſtomed."

"Allow me to introduce Miſs Belinda Roſemary," ſaid the ſchoolmiſtreſs, addreſſing me, and then while I was exclaiming in the politeſt manner that my permiſſion was granted, ſhe continued, "Miſs Belinda Roſemary, Lady Petronella Harkaway,—Lady Petronella Harkaway, Miſs

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Belinda Roſemary." While Belinda with her left hand on the ſkirt of her dreſs and her right preſſing her fan againſt her heart made me the moſt bewitching curtſies, accompanied by the moſt faſcinating ſmiles it is poſſible to conceive. But what could I do? Oh how aggravating it was to one of my moſt chivalrous diſpoſition to ſtand ſtolid and unbending before her. I think I muſt have brightened ſomewhat under the charming influence, for I certainly did reflect back the brilliant glances of thoſe ſparkling eyes. In fact nobody has ever accuſed me of not being poliſhed enough for the very beſt ſociety.

The little preliminaries having been gone through, Belinda was ſo good as to take a ſeat in front of me.

Now do you know, reader, I never felt more funny in my life; to be addreſſed as a *lady* was ſo droll, for I had always hitherto conſidered myſelf a gentleman. It was *very* awkward. Well, there ſat Belinda raiſing her eyebrows, while a ſmile played round her mouth.

"Come, Miſs Belinda, make haſte; have you nothing to ſay to Lady Petronella?"

"I thought perhaps ſhe would begin, Madam, as ſhe is ſo much older than I am."

"Now, Miſs Roſemary," ſaid the miſtreſs, with great ſeverity, "let me have none of that nonſenſe. If you think her ladyſhip ought to commence, begin at once in

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her name. It is the *commencement* of converſation which I deſire you to ſtudy; and the time may arrive when you will be as old as her ladyſhip, remember that."

"Do you think it likely, madam, I ſhall be a hundred and fourteen?" (looking penſively at the date on my back.)

"Belinda!" exclaimed the miſtreſs in a voice of thunder, "is this levity of conduct conſiſtent with the deference you owe to *me?* What do you mean by ſuch impertinent replies?"

I thought Belinda would never raiſe her eyes from the ground, ſhe kept them there ſo long. A knock at the door ſtartled her, and ſhe haſtily exclaimed in a feigned voice,

"My dear Miſs Belinda, do you think that is ſomebody come for you?" (Lady Petronella was ſuppoſed to ſay this.)

"Your ladyſhip is moſt obliging," replied Belinda; "but . . . ."

"Begin better, Miſs Belinda, begin better, that would be the *laſt* queſtion a lady juſt introduced would aſk," ſaid the miſtreſs, adding, "Come in," to the perſon who had knocked, who proved to be a ſervant come to aſk for ſomething from the ſtoreroom for one of the girls who was ill.

The miſtreſs turned to Belinda and ſaid, "By the time

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I return I deſire you will be engaged in a converſation ſuited to the Court of S. James',” and ſhe left the room.

Belinda jumped up, made an abſurd curtſey to the door, and then haſtily reſuming her ſeat, ſhe ſaid, addreſſing me,

“Is it not conſidered the height of all that is tireſome to have to talk to your ladyſhip?”

(Imagine my feelings, they cauſed me to crack in all my joints.)

“Humph, well, that is the oddeſt queſtion ever put to me,” replied Belinda in a ſhrill tone, the one ſhe was ſo obliging as to adopt as that of Lady P.

“Is it, indeed! well, now I will aſk you another. Can you imagine anything more agreeable than liſtening to my ſweet voice?”

(“You conceited . . . .” but there I ſtopped.)

“No, indeed, that is impoſſible,” replied the ſhrill voice of Lady Petronella.

“Ah, well,” ſaid Belinda, “ſo far then we are *d'accord*, and ſhall get on better than might have been anticipated. Allow me next to aſk your ladyſhip what made all your joints crack juſt now?”

“A nervous tremor, my dear.”

“Oh, indeed; I ſuppoſe you have gone through a great deal in your day. I am a wonderful hand at miſ-

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takes in hiſtory, but if I am right now, I think you muſt have been born about the time William Rufus was ſlain; were you growing in the New Foreſt then?"

And then ſhe burſt into ſuch an uncontrollable fit of laughter, that I looked on in the profoundeſt aſtoniſhment. What an extraordinary queſtion to aſk Lady Petronella, thought I, and ſo I ſuppoſe Belinda thought by the way ſhe went on laughing.

"I beg your ladyſhip's pardon," at laſt ſhe ſaid, "I made a little miſtake, accidents will happen in the beſt regulated families, as I dare ſay you know by the crack in your ſkull, and the ſinged appearance of your left leg."

"Miſs Belinda!" ſaid a ſtern voice.

"Madam?" ſaid Belinda, with a ſtart.

"What are you ſaying to Lady Petronella?"

"I was remarking, madam, that accidents will happen ſometimes."

"Oh, indeed; what were you ſaying about her left leg?"

"Ahem!" ſaid Belinda; "I—I obſerved that—that it looked as if it had been—finged."

"Miſs Roſemary, you are incorrigible. Don't you know perſonal remarks are the height of rudeneſs. Is *that* a converſation ſuited for the Court of S. James', which Court you ought to prepare to adorn? Sit down directly and proceed; you have but five minutes more,

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and I ſhall order you an impoſition unleſs I am pleaſed now with what I hear."

Belinda tried to look the eſſence of gravity, and after a moment's heſitation ſhe ſaid, looking towards me,

"I believe your ladyſhip," (for in thoſe days they always talked in this formal ſtyle,) "has lately left town. Have you retired to this lonely retreat to court the muſes?"

"Nay, why this queſtion?"

"I have had the honour of reading ſome ſweet verſes to Daphné, which fame aſcribes to your pen."

"Ah, flatterer! I ſhall make no reply to that, but I will promiſe you a copy of any ſonnets I may compoſe while here, the firſt ſhall be to your roſe trees, I ſee you are fond of flowers."

"Your ladyſhip is vaſtly obliging. Did you hear much good muſic in town this year?"

"A good deal; and I took leſſons on the harpſicord and alſo on the guitar from Signor Bartolomeo, his ſtyle is divine."

Belinda and Lady Petronella continued to converſe in this manner for ſome minutes, and then the time being exhauſted, the miſtreſs ſaid,

"You may go now, Miſs Roſemary, you have done better ſince I returned. But if ſuch giddineſs as I have witneſſed to-day occurs again, I ſhall not paſs it over."

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Belinda roſe, and again making me the loweſt curtſeys, ſhe left the room, not without another to the old lady however.

This being the firſt time I was converſed with as an imaginary perſon, the occaſion impreſſed itſelf on my memory.

The other girls had alſo to practiſe the art of converſation in the ſame way, but I ſhall not trouble my readers with ſpecimens of their converſational powers. I remained ſome time in the ſchool, and I think I may be allowed to remark that Belinda would when ſhe left have met my warm approval had I been a courtier at S. James'; although full of fun, ſhe grew up really a very ſteady girl, and I know all the miſtreſſes as well as the girls were very ſorry to loſe her.

I recollect her father coming to fetch her in his poſt-chariot and four, with a couple of men on horſeback, who rode in attendance on the carriage. She was then ſeventeen, and looked as good as ſhe was pretty.

My life in the houſe of the revered ſchoolmiſtreſs paſſed with great propriety, and a quietude ſomewhat trying to the nerves. There was a degree of ſameneſs and tameneſs in it that does not incline me to enlarge upon it in theſe memoirs. I ſhall therefore paſs on to my next awaking.

Some conſiderable time had been paſſed by me in that condition of mental repoſe which I generally term torpor,

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from which I was gradually awaking, when the gruff tones of a manly voice arreſted my attention.

A hearty laugh ſucceeded, and laughter being contagious, peals of merry laughter followed from younger members of a party of people by whom I was ſurrounded. The whole ſet appeared to be in the higheſt poſſible ſpirits. "Couſin Betſy" ſaid ſuch abſurd things, "Uncle Abſalom" was ſo vaſtly witty, and there was I being dragged and puſhed along over the uneven flooring, at the riſk of every limb I poſſeſſed. Down rolled half a dozen children when I came into ſudden colliſion with a flooring board at leaſt half an inch higher than thoſe of the paſſage I had croſſed, the ſhock ſending them down like ninepins, and they rolled like balls.

Uncle Abſalom made faces and grimaces of ſo intenſely facetious a character, that while they rubbed their bruiſed heads and knees, they all laughed nearly to ſuffocation, and rolled on the floor again from ſheer exhauſtion. At length having been lifted over the threſhold, I was again puſhed along the floor of a large low long-ſhaped room, and finally placed at the upper end amid the acclamations of quite a crowd of people of every variety of age. The children made ſo great a noiſe, and danced ſo wildly round me, waving their arms about in a triumphant kind of manner, that I was exceedingly alarmed when I was left alone with them.

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"Hurra! hurra!" exclaimed the boys, "the very thing! the very thing for us," and again I was pulled firſt one way, and then the other, till I think there would have been little left of me, had the elder girls not interfered in my behalf, and the entrance of an old woman, who was apparently a ſort of nurſe, and who had rather an awful frown on her brow, quickly reduced the noiſy crew to a ſtate of comparative ſtillneſs.

The old dame told the children that ſhe ſhould immediately ſeparate them, and take me away, and put an end to their amuſement, unleſs they behaved in a more orderly manner, and a good deal more did ſhe ſay which made ſome of the young party look very blue. Indeed all of them appeared to think her words alarming, and to be in conſiderable terror leſt her threats ſhould be put into execution.

After holding up her finger, and ſhaking her head in a warning manner, ſhe left the room and ſhut the door, and the young people returned to their various occupations. They were wonderfully quiet at firſt, ſcarcely ſpeaking above a whiſper; ſome were engaged in making garlands of evergreens and holly berries, ſome were working away at dreſſes of coloured ſtuffs, others were having dreſſes tried on, and peals of laughter ſoon roſe again, when a legging was by miſtake found to have been ſewn to an arm-hole, and a ſleeve put in at the hole intended

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for the throat of a fine red coat, laced with ſilver, and trimmed with various ornamental braidings. I particularly obſerved one lad who was dreſſed in armour in the ſtyle of that I had ſeen in the hall of Fitzclere Caſtle; he looked magnificent, and waved his ſword (which I was mighty glad to obſerve was a wooden one) in proud defiance of the enemies of his country. On his left arm was a ſhield, a crimſon ſaſh croſſed his ſhoulder, and a ſnow-white plume adorned his helmet. He was pronounced to be *perfection*,—which was ſaying quite enough, I thought. Then I heard a ſhout for "Roaſt Beef and Plum Pudding."

"What, are they going to dinner now?" ſaid I mentally, when I was ſurpriſed by the words,

"Here we are, here we are."

"What!" ſaid I again, "are times indeed ſo changed as this? do I hear Beef and Pudding replying in their *own words*, the one from the ſpit, the other from the pot? Strange indeed!" I was going on with my meditations, but was violently interrupted by the entrance of two boys who were inſtantly captured, and habited in a dreſs intended to repreſent the excellent cheer already mentioned, and who looked the moſt abſurd figures imaginable.

"Ah," ſighed I, "the good old days are paſt—roaſt beef and plum pudding exiſt but in name!"

Such a merry ſet of creatures as thoſe among whom I

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found myſelf I never remembered. Jokes and nonſenſe prevailed to the complete extinction of wiſdom, and I determined to enjoy myſelf too. They began to trim me up at laſt, and very grand I muſt have looked.

The evening was now cloſing in, and heavy ſnow continually falling, but no coldneſs was diſcernible within. The upper end of the room was grandly ornamented in various ways. A large miſtletoe bough hung from the beam in the centre of the room; a huge yule log burnt on the hearth, and with the help of candles placed in different parts of the room lighted it brilliantly. I found myſelf an object of conſiderable importance, when with many fanciful ceremonies Father Chriſtmas entered the chamber, and took me for his throne, and then in came ſuch a merry crowd, after which the fun began.

If I were to attempt to deſcribe the valour of S. George, the terrible appearance of the dragon, who ſeveral times performed the feat of ſtanding bolt upright on his tail, to the terror and amazement of the audience, when he was engaged in ſingle combat with S. George, by whom he was at length ſlain: if I were to try to depict the ſcene which enſued,—the beauty of the Egyptian princeſs, the elegance of Dame Mincepie, the bold bearing of brave Robin Hood, or the ſkill of the doctor in curing inſtantaneouſly the Turkiſh knight who "lay bleeding on the ground," in conſequence of a deadly

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wound inflicted by that invincible hero S. George, I ſhould only be doing injuſtice to the grandeur and charm of the whole affair. And yet I would fain make you ſee it all as I ſaw it. As to Roaſt Beef and his fellow page Plum Pudding, they were brim full of fun, and played more merry antics than I can number.

At one end of the long room was a table, and as ſoon as the play was over, I obſerved ſervants carrying in plum puddings and beef, ſuch as had ſmoked on the boards when I was young.

"Hollo, then, how is this?" thought I, as theſe ſteaming and moſt excellent looking edibles were placed upon the table. "It *is* all as it uſed to be then, and *now* I begin to underſtand it all."

Next moment I was dragged and puſhed along, and placed at the head of the ſupper table, and found the jovial maſter of the houſe had choſen me for the ſeat of honour.

"Well, this is very good fun, I declare," ſaid I, (not aloud,) and a right merry party they were theſe mummers, I can aſſure my readers.

Then ſupper ended, the fiddlers tuned up, and dancing commenced. But, alas, ſenſations to which I was no ſtranger announced the approach of ſleep, and before "down the middle" had been ſucceeded by "up again," I was in a ſtate of profound ſomnolency, ſo I can tell you nothing more about the gay doings of that night. I ſel-

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dom fall aſleep after ſuch a ſhort period of wakefulneſs, as I did on that occaſion.

I was at one time in the houſe of a curious character whoſe name was Giles Scriven. I awoke from a trance to find myſelf in a ſmall room at the top of a houſe in a town. I believe the houſe was ſituated in a narrow back ſtreet, in what had once been a part of the town reſorted to by a higher claſs of perſons than thoſe who now inhabited it.

The room in which I found myſelf was moſt diſmal, the walls had once been covered with a cheerful paper, which, however, was now torn and diſcoloured, and in ſome places hanging in ſhreds. Green patches too there were as from damp, and in the corners the cobwebs and duſt, the accumulation of years, I ſhould think, added to the dirty neglected appearance of all around.

The floor had not been cleaned for a very long time, and as to the ſmall piece of window, it was ſo dim that you could not poſſibly tell whether the ſky beyond was clear or cloudy, blue or black. The room had really *two* windows, but one of them had been boarded up with rough planks and bits of wood, apparently they had ſerved ſome other purpoſe firſt, as they had bits of old ruſty nails ſticking to them in ſome parts. The other window was alſo covered more than half way up, I ſuppoſe in order to prevent perſons on the roof of the oppoſite houſe from

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peering in. I could ſee the tops of chimneys oppoſite, but they, I ſuppoſe, were without the gift of ſight, or not likely to tell ſecrets. A dirty, faded, ragged curtain hung ſome way down over the top of this window, ſo that from the oppoſite ſide of the room you could barely ſee a quarter of a yard of the window itſelf, conſequently, although the clock was ſtriking five only, and a ſummer ſun was ſhining, the room was very far from light.

I was not alone in this cheerleſs apartment, beſides an old chair with no back, a ſtool with three whole legs and three quarters of a fourth, there was a human being. I ſaw him ſtanding by the door, as ſtill as a ſtatue. A tall, very thin, bent man, and yet not exactly old, his hair was griſly what little there was of it outſide the dingy brown cap he wore. His coat, which was perfectly threadbare, as I obſerved when he came near to me, was long and looſe; his whole attire was in keeping with the room, for it was worn out, and ſeemed to hang together by the numerous patches it had upon it rather than by the original threads. But all this I could not clearly ſee as he ſtood by the door. His long thin bony hands were moving ſomewhat convulſively, he held ſome kind of inſtrument in them which turned out to be a chiſel. What could he be, and what was he going to do?

At length he turned ſlowly round. "Safe, ſafe," I heard him mutter, and a ſmile, if one may ſo call the

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contortion, paſſed acroſs his face. Then he looked furtively about him, and walked cautiouſly round the room, peering and peeping.

I ſaw him peeping through the planks which were before the cloſed up window, and he puſhed two or three pieces of paper into the crevices, muttering as he did ſo. After that he ſtood oppoſite the other window, raiſing himſelf to his utmoſt height to ſee out as far as poſſible. Then he ſmiled again, and repeated, "Safe, ſafe," with a kind of chuckle of ſatisfaction.

This done he placed a key upon the table,—a piece of furniture which I have omitted to mention before, and coming up to me he took me by the arm and pulled me half a yard back from my former poſition.

The next thing he did was very ſtrange, I thought. He knelt down and forced the end of the ſtrong iron chiſel I have already mentioned, between the flooring boards over which I had been ſtanding, with much exertion, for they ſtuck very cloſe; he ſucceeded in inſerting it, and then he carefully raiſed a piece of plank about two feet in length, and lifted from a hole beneath two *very* heavy bags and a box. He was not very ſtrong evidently, or he would have found it leſs of an exertion than it ſeemed to be to him, to place theſe three things on the table.

Having got them there he again liſtened, going to the

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door more than once for that purpoſe, but the houſe was as ſilent as poſſible. I heard no ſound whatever beyond thoſe in the room where I ſtood.

With nervous excitement and evident delight the old man now untied his bags and proceeded to pour their contents out upon the table. Theſe contents were neither more nor leſs than a heap of gold coins! There they lay in a great pyramid before him, and there he worſhipped them with thoſe ſtrange eyes of his.

I ſaw him paſs his hand ſlowly over the yellow heaps ſeveral times. Then he peered into the box, lifting out thin papers with great care and ſpreading them on the table. Theſe he ſeemed to be counting; and next he made a great number of little piles of golden coins, and he counted theſe over, every now and then ſmiling and bending his head down deeper on his breaſt and raiſing his ſhoulders up to his ears. I fancy he was pleaſed when he did this. Invariably after thus ſhowing his gratification he turned ſuddenly and fixed his gaze with an expreſſion almoſt furious either on me or ſome near object. Several times he appeared to ſee ſome hated form ſtanding before him. After about a minute this extraordinary behaviour would ceaſe and with a ſmile he would be himſelf again.

It ſeemed to me that he was the only human occupant of the houſe: he was ſo extremely neglected in appear-

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ance, and looked ſo *unwaſhed* and uncared for, that I thought he muſt be living alone. His thoughts ſeemed wholly given to his gold, which he appeared to value in a way quite new and ſtrange to me. I often wondered why he liſtened ſo cautiouſly, and uſed the words, "Safe, ſafe," as he did.

One day old Giles Scriven came up into my room looking very much agitated. He walked up and down ſeveral times muttering and murmuring, and then having ſecured the door and placed the key on the table as uſual, he began talking aloud, as he not unfrequently did. I fancy he only did ſo when in that room though, for I never heard his voice at other times.

"Yes, yes," he began, "yes, yes, let her come here, *here* to me; that will be the plan. Let me have her *here*. Let me ſee it all over again. You, Giles Scriven, will receive ſo much for her board, and for your care of her, ha! ha! ha! I think, I rather think, my houſe will be a fortreſs in which ſhe *will* be taken care of. There are precious, there are valuable things—. No, no. I am a poor old wretch. I am her very affectionate uncle; ſhe is my very dutiful niece. She has no roof over her head; I kindly take her in. She is my ward, my charge. She, a miſerable *girl!* Had ſhe been a boy, well and good; but what is a girl fit for? a uſeleſs worthleſs thing, that can but bring trouble, and muſt bear the conſequence. Yes, I will

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take her in, *but let her ſee that ſhe does not annoy me.* Let her mind what I ſay: let her keep in her own place: no prying, no peeping."

It was not many days after this that I one morning fancied I heard another being in this gloomy houſe. There were certain undefined ſounds which were ſtrange to me.

"Can that be ſomeone crying?" thought I once, "or is it the wind, or a kettle humming on the fire?"

Weeks went by, but brought no ſolution to what I had begun to fancy a myſtery.

A thin pale face, a pair of dark beautiful eyes, a ſlight bending girliſh figure. This, reader, was the viſion I beheld to my amazement about noon one day in early ſpring. The girl was ſtanding in the doorway. Old Giles never locked the door when he was not in the room, why I do not know, but he never had done ſo. On the contrary, he had always left it a little bit open. The girl looked round the room, but did not come in, ſhe looked wan and half-ſtarved and very poor, but there was a bright intelligent expreſſion on her face.

"What a miſerable dingy hole!" ſhe ſaid, with a ſort of ſhudder.

At that moment, a ſtreak of ſunſhine fell acroſs me, and the girl obſerved this, and I ſaw her gaze reſt upon me, as if my appearance had ſome attraction for her. She then went away, and quickly her light ſteps deſcended to

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the lower part of the houſe. Once or twice I thought I heard her ſteps again, but a long time paſſed ere ſhe again viſited my chamber. The old man came frequently, looking, if poſſible, more miſerably clad and more ſtarved than ever. One day he was in a great ſtate of happineſs. He muttered, and chuckled, and ſqueezed his bony hands together, and ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and walked up to me with a haſty ſtep. He gave me a ſhove, which ſent me ever ſo much farther from the brink of his ſecret hole than before.

I obſerved that he took out from his pocket a leather caſe, and from this he extracted ſeveral pieces of ſilver paper, bank-notes, in fact, and ſeveral pieces of gold. He then took his box and bags out from their hidingplace, and went through the uſual routine of counting, fingering, admiring, and arranging. I heard him murmur, "Another ten, another twenty, another ten, another twenty." From which I concluded ſome addition had been made to his ſtore. It was on the following day that I obſerved a piece of ſomething bright lying at a little diſtance from me behind a low ſtool. Whether it was one of thoſe golden guineas or not by which my owner ſet ſo vaſt a ſtore I could not clearly ſee, but I wondered whether he would diſcover his loſs if it was.

When next he counted over his money, I took particular notice of him, and I ſoon ſaw that he had miſſed

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ſomething. He became much agitated, counted and recounted his gold, divided it into ſeparate heaps, and piled it into ſets of various heights. Time flew by, unheeded by him, as he ſat there, looking the picture of diſmay. Poor man, what a terrible thing it muſt be to be rich! thought I. You are the moſt unhappy looking ſpecimen of the human race with whom my lot has yet fallen.

While I was pitying him, as he ſat trembling ſo cloſe to me, I heard a knock at the door. Giles ſtarted as though he had been ſhot, and his hair ſeemed to ſtand on end. Another knock, and a voice which ſaid in a tone of ſome anxiety and ſome terror I thought, "Uncle! Uncle! are you there?"

"Go down, go down, girl!" ſcreamed old Giles, in reply. "What do you mean by intruding up here!"

"I beg your pardon, I feared you were ill; it is ſo late," and away ſhe went.

It took Giles Scriven ſome minutes to recover from the ſhock his niece's voice had occaſioned him, and it was a good many more before he had put away his treaſures, without, however, having made the diſcovery of the miſſing one.

I think he had ſome idea of parting with me after this. Perhaps the thought ſtruck him, that I might be worth the ſum he had loſt. He looked at me one day, and muttered ſomething about turning me into gold, and then

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added, "the older you are the more you'll be worth." His niece came into the room one afternoon many weeks after this, and I never ſaw any face ſo changed as her's was. Pale and wan I had thought her the firſt time I ſaw her, but I ſhall never forget her appearance on that day, or indeed the circumſtances which occurred on that day.

She came ſlowly into the room, her dreſs little better than rags, though patched and darned and mended, hung looſely upon her terribly thin figure. Her face was white, except where a pale blue tint ſhaded her eyes and mouth. Her eyes had loſt the brightneſs which was remarkable in them once. She came ſlowly into the room, and ſtopped when ſhe had reached the centre of it, and then ſhe talked aloud, and I think I remember every word ſhe ſaid. "What a miſerable exiſtence mine is," ſhe began, "I really *have* tried to make the beſt of things, and to be happy, but I feel all power to do ſo failing me now. To live without hope, that is the moſt terrible ſtate of life conceivable. I *cannot*, *cannot*, go on long in this way. My uncle never ſpeaks to me. Poſitively, if I did not talk to myſelf aloud, I ſhould forget how to ſpeak. I cannot think how it is he is ſo wretchedly poor. He ſays it is impoſſible to afford more. Then let me go to the workhouſe. Any thing would be better than this. The very loweſt, meaneſt, work. Work! yes, if I had but

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work to do! How I ſhould like to clean this room, but I have not the means of doing ſo; and—I doubt if I've the ſtrength,—my ſtrength is faſt failing,—there is that comfort," and ſhe ſmiled a wan ſad ſmile, followed by tears, which ſhe let fall without taking the trouble to wipe them. Coming nearer to me, ſhe obſerved the duſt which lay thick upon me. "Poor old chair," ſhe ſaid, "there is ſomething about you that recalls happier days," and ſhe wiped off ſome of the duſt, and then ſitting down on the floor at my feet ſhe reſted her elbow upon me and leaned her head on her hand.

"What can my uncle do up here? I can't think how he finds anything to do in this room," ſhe ſaid, "I ſuppoſe he would half kill me if he found me here. I ſhould not care much, I think, if he did it wholly. Never a letter, never a line! nothing to tell me who lives and dies! totally and completely forgotten, I might be in a priſon cell, or in a convent. Oh how much better off I ſhould be in a convent! I thought, I fancied, Archie might find me out,—but I ſuppoſe he is afraid of his uncle and of mine too, perhaps; or perhaps he is gone away from England or married, or dead," and ſhe leaned her head on her hands again, and ſat ſtill wearily for a long time. Then looking round, ſhe obſerved ſomething I thought,—and I was right,—for ſhe went and picked up the piece of gold which I have already mentioned, and which from her

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low poſition, (ſhe was ſitting on the floor,) ſhe could plainly ſee. "A ſovereign!" ſhe exclaimed, "actually and really a ſovereign!" and ſhe turned it over quickly in her hands examining it carefully. "Whoſe can it be?" ſhe ſaid. "It muſt have lain there a very long time. My uncle never mentioned loſing one."

She ſtood ſtill, looking at the piece of gold as it lay on the open palm of her little thin hand, and I think ſhe was rapidly turning over many thoughts in her mind. She cloſed her hand upon it, and left the room quietly and quickly, carefully placing the door ajar juſt as ſhe had found it.

What ſhe did with it, or what became either of it or of her I knew not; ſhe left the houſe, that I knew, and I never ſaw her in it again. I fell into a trance that very night, and when I next awoke, it was not in that room that I found myſelf.

My next waking was dreary enough; pitch dark it was when I was ſtruck by the tones of a clock at a great diſtance. Hour followed hour, ſtill no light, nothing but the ſame perpetual gloom, excepting that at certain times I was aware of a long ſtreak of pale light which came, I ſuppoſe, through ſome chink in the ſhutters, proving that outſide there was the full light of day. I was covered up in ſomething; I felt ſure of it, ſomething thick it ſeemed. I was very melancholy; I could not bear the

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continuance of this wretched exiſtence without falling into a ſtate of the utmoſt depreſſion.

One day I heard ſounds—a ſtep approaching—no, it was merely ſome accidental noiſe. Time ſped on, and again many days after I fancied I heard ſteps, but I was miſtaken. At laſt a ſtrange noiſe, (in a court below it ſeemed to me,) was followed by what I could not miſtake *this* time, the tread of ſeveral feet, and, oh! joy, joy, coming towards me. The door opens, and in come ſeveral perſons; the ſhutters are undone, and the ſunlight brings a cheering influence to diſſipate my wretchedneſs. I was lifted up and carried away, but being covered up in matting, I could not ſee where I was going.

"Put that one up alongſide this one."

Theſe words were ſaid by ſome man's voice, and I was hoiſted up on to a waggon, I believe. A great many more things beſide me were alſo put on the waggon, which was ſeveral hours packing, and then we ſtarted.

I could obſerve that we ſtopped to pay turnpikes, and for the men to get ſome beer now and then; and on the night following my departure, we ſtayed ſome hours at an inn on the road. I longed to look about me, and moſt anxiouſly awaited the moment when I ſhould arrive at the place of my deſtination, wherever that might be.

At laſt we did arrive there, and thankful enough I was.

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I heard many voices, and orders given about placing the other pieces of furniture which had travelled with me, and then I was lifted down and ſet on the ground with a jerk which, had I been formed of leſs ſolid materials, might have been no way improving, but much the reverſe. That night I was not relieved of my cover, but next morning a great cutting, ſnipping, and pulling took place, and I was myſelf again.

"Oh, this one had better be put in the lobby, I ſuppoſe?"

"Yes, and you and Robert can carry it there."

The queſtion was aſked by a ſervant-boy, and the reply made by a woman who had a large bunch of keys hanging to her waiſt. Robert was another ſervant I ſaw by his livery. So I was carried into the lobby, which was a wide ſhort paſſage at the top of a broad flight of ſtairs. Two doors opened from it, one at the end, and one at the ſide. There was a large window with a deep receſs, in which a number of flowers in very pretty china pots were placed. There were a few other chairs, and a dark cabinet or two, a ſmall table, and that was nearly all the furniture.

Here I remained for a great many years. A lady and her two nephews lived in the houſe. The boys were eleven and twelve years old when firſt I ſaw them. I heard one of them ſay, "Oh, here's our old chair," and

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then he added, "How are you, old fellow?" as he gave me a knock with a big ſtick he held in his hand. And then his brother gave me a friendly thump. I thought I recogniſed a likeneſs to ſome one I had ſeen before, but I could not recollect to whom. I found out eventually that the boys were children of the boy, as he *then* was, who had played the part of Father Chriſtmas ſo many years before, but he was dead, and they were orphans. I heard them talk of the account their father had given them of that evening.

I recollect one thing that happened to one of thoſe boys which I had ſomething to do with, ſo I ſhall relate it. His aunt had a little bird, a bullfinch, of which ſhe was very fond. It was pretty tame, and ſhe uſed to take it out of the cage ſometimes, when ſhe had previouſly ſhut all the doors and windows, but ſhe never allowed any one elſe to let it out. I had heard her forbid her nephews to do ſo. One wet day the younger of the boys came ſauntering into the lobby exclaiming at the pouring rain, and looking very croſs. He had a ſmall hammer in his hand, with which he amuſed himſelf by knocking little blows on everything that came in his way; at laſt he got tired of this, and he ſpied his aunt's bullfinch. The cage was hanging cloſe to the window, the boy pulled me up to it, and ſtanding upon me, firſt looked into the cage, then pointed his finger at the bird, then he opened the

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cage door, and put his hand in. Bully was frightened at firſt, but at laſt hopped on to the boy's finger. This delighted him immenſely. At length he ſaid,

"Why you have not been let out to-day, Bully, and as my aunt is away, I don't ſee why I ſhould not give you your liberty, ſo come along."

I thought he muſt have forgotten his aunt's words. He took the little bird in his hand, and carried it round the room. I hoped he would not let it looſe, but idleneſs is the mother of miſchief, and this boy was very idle. In another minute Bully was flying about at full liberty; when a voice called the boy, he endeavoured to catch the bird, but without ſucceſs. Again a call, and the boy ſtamped with impatience, but his hurried manner only frightened the bird, and when he flapped his handkerchief at it, it flew to the top of a picture-frame. Juſt then his brother came running up the ſtairs, and throwing open the door he exclaimed,

"Why didn't you anſwer? What are you about? We muſt go *directly*, you know."

"Why, has it ſtopped raining?" ſaid the younger one.

"Yes, to be ſure it has. Hollo! why there's the cage open—where's the bird?" and then the other boy was obliged to confeſs what he had done.

"How *could* you do it, John?" ſaid the elder one; "we *muſt* catch it before my aunt comes, you know how

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very angry ſhe will be." And then he pulled me up to the wall under the picture, but he could not reach high enough to take the bird in that way, ſo then they piled up ſeveral things upon me, and the eldeſt, who was a moſt good-natured boy, and anxious to ſave his brother from puniſhment, again got up, and tried gently to catch the poor little frightened bird, but juſt as he put his hand upon it, it darted away, and Geoffry ſtarted, overbalanced himſelf, and fell heavily to the ground. He turned very pale, and ſeemed fainting; his brother ran for ſome water, but when he returned with it Geoffry had ſomewhat recovered.

"Where's Bully?" he ſaid, looking up. They looked all round the room, when a little chirp drew their attention towards the cage, and there was Bully on one of the perches in it. Geoffry ſmiled. "Well, I ſent you there at all events," he ſaid.

John went and ſhut the cage, looking very much aſhamed of himſelf, I thought. Geoffry was very much hurt, I felt ſure, but he ſoon got up from the carpet, on which he had laid himſelf down, and the two boys left the room.

Some hours after they returned, and their aunt was with them. Almoſt the firſt thing ſhe did was to go up to the cage, "Ah, you are all right, I ſee," ſhe ſaid to the bird. I ſaw the boys look at one another. Then

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ſhe ſaid to Geoffry, "I'm ſure there is ſomething the matter with you," and ſhe put her hand in a quick emphatic manner on his ſhoulder as ſhe ſpoke, upon which he gave a ſharp little cry as of pain. And then he confeſſed that his ſhoulder hurt him owing to his bruiſing it, but that it was "nothing at all."

His aunt left the boys in the lobby, and then John ſaid, "I ſay, Jeff, I'm ſo *very* ſorry; are you much hurt?"

"Oh, nothing to ſpeak of; it's bad if I'm touched juſt in one place, and my aunt put her hand ſo ſharply on me that I could hardly bear it."

The next day a grave old gentleman paſſed through the lobby. "Who's that I wonder," thought I.

It was the doctor, and as he paſſed me in returning, I heard him ſaying to the boys' tutor, "Geoffry is a noble fellow, he has borne a great deal of pain rather than bring his younger brother into diſgrace. It's the collar-bone which is broken."

I found that the boy's aunt felt ſo certain ſomething was wrong, that ſhe ſent for the doctor, who ſoon diſcovered what it was. And then John confeſſed the whole affair. He was ſo exceedingly ſorry for his brother, who would not ſay how he had managed to hurt himſelf, becauſe it would be telling of John.

I ſaw theſe boys grow up to be men before I made another migration. They often paſſed me, and ſometimes

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they uſed me as a ſeat, ſometimes as a table. Geoffry was a great fiſherman I fancy, for he made great numbers of flies of different kinds, and a book which he called "Old Iſaac" was frequently lying upon my lap, to which he often referred, and from which he now and then read deſcriptions to his brother relating to fiſhing affairs.

When Geoffry was about two or three and twenty, a young lady ſometimes appeared on the ſcene, a pretty girl ſhe was, and I was not ſurpriſed when I found that he was engaged to be married to her. She lived at no great diſtance, and when the marriage took place, Geoffry brought her home riding on a pillion behind him, attended by the groomſmen, and a large party of friends on horſe-back.

Riding in this faſhion was a common practice at the time, and as the road was very bad between the houſes of the two young people, I ſuppoſe they preferred the pillion plan, and ſo riding acroſs the fields, to jolting along the road in an old coach.

The young lady came through the lobby leaning on Geoffry's arm, and there ſhe was met by his aunt, who welcomed her with much tenderneſs, and told her it was a happy day for the family which ſaw her enter the houſe as Geoffry's bride; and ſo they paſſed on into the with-drawing-room.

The houſe was a large one, and on the marriage of

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young Geoffry his aunt had a ſet of rooms in a part of the houſe into which I had never been carried until the day after he and his bride came home, then, however, I did go there. He had a good deal of new furniture brought into the houſe, and alterations were made in the arrangement of the rooms. The conſequence of all which was I was very nearly ſent off to a town ſomewhere near by to be diſpoſed of, but the old lady ſaid ſhe would not hear of it, as ſhe had always had a ſpecial fancy for me.

"It is ſuch a nice old chair," ſhe ſaid; "if you want to ſell it, name your price, Geoffry, and I will buy it."

Geoffry laughed, and told her he muſt either have five hundred pounds for me, or ſhe muſt accept me as a preſent from him.

"It *is* a nice chair," ſaid his wife; "now I look cloſer at it, I ſee it is not a very common one; and how curious theſe figures—a *one*, a *ſix*, a *five*, and an *eight*."

"How many does that make?" aſked Geoffry; "can you do ſo hard a ſum as that, my dear?"

"How ſhould I? I never learned Latin and Greek," ſaid ſhe. "It can't mean that it is one thouſand ſix hundred and fifty-eight years old, I ſuppoſe?"

Geoffry laughed at this, and ſaid he ſhould have to give her leſſons in the claſſics to enable her to put two and two together, for which ſhe tried to give him a box on the ear, which he avoided by jumping over me.

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They ſeemed to find each other very amuſing, but I muſt ſay I thought them very ſtupid, and I was impatient to know what was to become of me. Still I rather enjoyed liſtening to their merry laughter, and I was not ſorry to hear Geoffry's wife tell his aunt ſhe did not mean to loſe ſight of me altogether, and that I muſt be *her* chair when ſhe went to pay her aunt a viſit in her private ſitting-room.

"Aunt, if you don't carry off the old fellow pretty ſoon, my wife won't let you have it at all, I foreſee that," ſaid Geoffry.

"It has ſeveral blemiſhes," ſaid the young lady; ſhe was looking at my leg which had been ſcorched a little when Brenda's log fell, as you doubtleſs remember, beloved reader, "and here's a mark as if a ſword-cut had ſhaved a tiny ſlice off," (that was Dick Verney's.)

"Well, my dear, I like it all the better becauſe it is not new, and I dare ſay if it could tell its hiſtory it would be an intereſting one," ſaid Mrs. Penelope.

"Tell its hiſtory," ſaid I to myſelf; "ha! not a bad idea; hum, ha!"

"This way, take it up ſideways; you go firſt, there, that's it. How ever ſhall we get round this corner? Don't come ſo faſt. There, you've knocked a bit as big as my head out of the wall."

"Oh, yes, or rather bigger, iſn't it, eh?"

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"Oh! oh! I ſay, George, you've driven *my* head into the wall."

"Let it ſtay there then, you can do without it, I'm ſure; it's never been no manner o' uſe to ye ſince you've had it. Ha, ha, ha!" &c., &c., &c.

This, reader, is a ſpecimen of the converſation which was held between the leader George, who carried my head, and the man who came laſt, ſupporting my legs; up ſtairs we went, then along a narrow paſſage, turning ſuddenly to the right, down two ſteps, along another paſſage, another ſharp corner, more ſteps, through a room, down a winding ſtaircaſe—ſtop—a door—George knocks. "Come in." In we go, and "Here we are," thinks I, "and a mighty nice place too."

A room rather longer than ſquare; bright poliſhed floor; large window, table in the window, pretty cabinets near the walls, and the walls themſelves covered with what I had never ſeen before, that is, paper which had beautiful pictures on it; and no wonder many people came to ſee it, for I heard that it was quite a novelty.

Mrs. Penelope the aunt was not in the room, but her maid, Mrs. Patty, told the men where to place me, and there I was left.

Mrs. Penelope ſpent great part of her time in that room. She was a very benevolent perſon, I ſuppoſe, for people were for ever coming to ſee her, to whom

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ſhe gave money, or clothing, or good advice, or kind words.

"Mrs. Beckett, ma'am," ſaid Mrs. Patty one day as ſhe opened the door; "but, la, ma'am, you are too tired, and too buſy to ſee her to-day."

"No, Patty, ſhe has had a long walk, ſo you muſt let her come in."

"Well, if I *muſt*, I *muſt*," ſaid Mrs. Patty; "but if the life is not wearied out of you, ma'am, very ſoon, my name is not Patience Pruſe."

Theſe words were ſaid in a perfectly audible voice, notwithſtanding which, I do not know whether Mrs. Penelope heard them, for ſhe made a loud "Hem" while they were ſpoken.

In came Mrs. Beckett, ſhe ſeemed in a very flurried kind of ſtate. Mrs. Penelope begged her to be ſeated, and—I was the chair neareſt at hand.

The viſit appeared to be made chiefly on account of a letter which Mrs. Beckett had received that morning, and which had contained a ten-pound note. It had been ſent to her with a letter, which Mrs. Beckett ſaid overflowed with kindneſs. The poor woman's eyes overflowed with tears as ſhe ſpoke of it.

Some diſtreſs ſhe had been in, that was evident, and ſhe had a ſon about whom ſhe was very anxious, and this ten pounds ſhe ſaid would do a vaſt deal for him.

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Juſt then there was ſome interruption, for a meſſage was brought to Mrs. Penelope. Mrs. Beckett roſe to go, ſaying ſhe would leave the letter with Mrs. Penelope, that ſhe might ſee how very kindly it was worded. She put the ten-pound note back into it, hardly ſeeming to know what ſhe was doing I thought, for Mrs. Patty was ſtanding by, waiting for her miſtreſs' orders, and looking anything but pleaſed with Mrs. Beckett for ſtaying ſo long.

An hour or two after this Mrs. Penelope ſat down to read the letter, and afterwards held it on her lap while thinking it over. There came a tap at the door, and a young maid-ſervant entered; ſhe received ſome orders from Mrs. Penelope, and was told to give ſome freſh water to the linnet, and to fetch ſome bread and milk for the parrot.

Mrs. Penelope then croſſed the room, and as ſhe did ſo I obſerved that ſhe let fall the letter, cloſe to a table on which ſhe had placed two others.

By-and-by, when it was getting dark, Geoffry came in calling for his aunt; finding ſhe was not there, he picked the letter up, looked at the direction, and placed it with the other letters. Then came a footman and took all the letters and popped them into a leather bag, which he locked, and carried off.

"That letter was never meant to go into that bag," thought I.

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The next morning the young maid-ſervant appeared with very red eyes, and there was a peculiar tone in the voices of all thoſe whom I heard ſpeak. Search was made in the room, I was ſhoved out of the way in a rough manner, as if I was thought to have committed ſome fault; the carpet was lifted up, drawers were opened and their contents examined.

It appeared to me all that day that there was ſomething wrong, though I ſaw little of the houſehold, for Geoffry having gone from home the evening before, Mrs. Penelope was ſpending her time in the part of the houſe inhabited by her niece, who I ſuppoſe was only too glad of her aunt's company during her huſband's abſence. Miſtreſs Patty came in once or twice with her noſe very high in the air, and her mouth very much purſed up, and ſhe had a provoking expreſſion on her face as ſhe murmured,

"I knows what I knows, and I ſees what I ſees; I've a-known what I've a-known, and I've a-ſeen what I've a-ſeen. And what is more, there *is* ſome as can ſee a little further than two inches and three quarters afore their very own noſe, and that not a long one."

The next day a maid to whoſe appearance I was not accuſtomed, brought the birds their food, and while ſhe was attending to them, a footman who came in to fetch ſomething for Mrs. Penelope, began talking in no very flattering terms of ſome one, who he ſaid ſhould be name-

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leſs, and went on to ſtate that it was in his opinion more likely that the parrot had eaten "that there ten-pound note," than that Mary Anne had touched it.

As I ſaw no more of Mary Anne, I concluded ſhe had gone away.

Geoffry came home next day, and Mrs. Penelope returned to her ſitting-room as uſual.

One evening, when ſhe came in from her bedroom, where ſhe and Mrs. Patty had been talking, Mrs. Patty followed with a ſhawl which ſhe put over her miſtreſs' ſhoulders. Before ſhe left the ſitting-room, Mrs. Patty ſaid,

"Perhaps you'll believe me in *future*, ma'am, when I ſay a girl is not to my mind. It's hard to be accuſed of being ill-natured, becauſe I don't like the looks of every body."

Mrs. Penelope made no reply to this ſpeech, and Mrs. Patty walked off with her noſe in that poſition which always provoked me.

Mrs. Penelope took up her knitting, then ſhe put it down again, and ſat with her eyes fixed upon me. I felt quite uncomfortable, till I obſerved from the peculiar expreſſion they had, that ſhe no more ſaw me than if I had not exiſted. In fact, ſhe was in a ſtudy of the colour I have heard called "brown." At laſt, as if ſome idea had ſuddenly ſtruck her, ſhe opened the drawer of an Indian cabinet, took out ſeveral letters and papers, and looked

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them over carefully. Then with a ſigh of diſappointment ſhe replaced them, and returned to her ſeat.

Time went on, and little occurred worthy of record. Geoffry hunted and ſhot, his wife played and ſang, Mrs. Penelope led her uſual quiet buſy life.

Several months flew by, and ſummer was at its height. Geoffry and his wife, and a treaſure of whom they ſeemed never to tire, and that was the baby, were in the gallery, whither I had alſo been moved. A ſervant brought his maſter a meſſage, and the two left the room together.

The ſervant told him a poor woman wanted to ſpeak to him, but that ſhe would not come in; ſhe was ſtanding at the entrance of the outer court. Geoffry went to her, and ſhe placed in his hands a letter carefully ſealed up, and immediately went away. He looked at the letter, and found that it was directed to himſelf, ſo he brought it in, and opened it in the preſence of myſelf, Mrs. Penelope, and his wife. It contained the letter ſo long loſt, and what is more, the ten-pound note which Mrs. Beckett had brought to ſhow to Mrs. Penelope.

Great was the aſtoniſhment of the party at this diſcovery. Geoffry almoſt immediately left the houſe to ſeek the poor woman, and learn the truth of this ſtrange affair. He did not return for a long time, not until the evening in ſhort, and then he drew me to the window,

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ſat down and related what had happened ſince he had left the houſe.

He had had great difficulty in diſcovering her, and ſtill greater in inducing her to tell her ſtory, which was as follows:—On the day the letter was loſt, her ſon was at the little ſhop kept by the poſtmiſtreſs in the town to which Mrs. Penelope's letter had been taken; when the letters were lying on the counter, a perſon came in to make a purchaſe in a great hurry, and the old poſtmiſtreſs went to ſerve her. The lad amuſed himſelf with obſerving the letters, and took up one which he ſaw was not faſtened; his curioſity excited, he next looked into it, and to his great ſurpriſe ſaw a bank note; the old woman coming back ſtartled him, and he haſtily put his hand behind him; ſhe angrily inquired what buſineſs he had with the letters, and he, half afraid and half aſhamed, made no reply; then ſhe aſked what he wanted, and he ſaid, "Sixpenny-worth of tobacco," which was what he had come for; ſhe gave it to him, and he left the ſhop carrying the letter with him. He told no one, and put it into a little box, which he buried in the garden. Days paſſed, and he thought of taking it back, but feared being accuſed of the theft. At length an occaſion occurred when the poſſeſſion of a ſum of money would have been of great value to his family, who were very poor, and he brought the bank note to his mother. The temptation was great,

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but that very night Jack, the boy, had an accident by which he was nearly killed, and the ſhock ſeemed to bring himſelf and his mother to a ſenſe of their intended wrong-doing in appropriating to their own uſe what was not theirs. The boy was ill and feveriſh, and he became intenſely anxious to get the money reſtored to its owner. He conjured his mother to loſe no time in taking it to Geoffry, for the loſs of the money had been made known, and ſhe fulfilled his deſire, taking care however, as ſhe thought, to prevent Geoffry's finding out who ſhe was, but he diſcovered her as I have ſaid.

Then came the queſtion how the letter had got to the poſt-office, and after a great deal of thought, and queſtioning, and conſidering, and endeavours to recollect, Geoffry ſuddenly exclaimed,

"Why, I perfectly remember picking up a letter from the floor that afternoon, and obſerving to whom it was directed. It was directed in a peculiar hand to Mrs. Beckett, and I know I wondered whoſe writing it was; I knew it was not yours, aunt. The letter was lying on the ground cloſe to thoſe already waiting for the poſt-bag, and I thought you had accidentally knocked down the loſt one, ſo I replaced it. I was in a great hurry, you know, ſo I did not take much heed, and never noticed whether the letter was ſealed or not."

And ſo ended this little affair, the myſtery being moſt

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happily cleared up. I ſhall not ſoon forget the ſmile on Mrs. Penelope's kind face when ſhe ſaid ſhe muſt immediately ſend for poor Mary Anne, and proclaim her honeſty to the world around.

I had the ſatisfaction of obſerving after this a marked change in the demeanour of Mrs. Patience Pruſe, whoſe noſe never from that time attained the angle which had been ſo great an annoyance to me.

I have an idea, but it is only an idea, that Geoffry ſhowed ſome kindneſs privately to Jack and his mother, and helped the boy to a place as ſoon as he had fairly recovered from his bad accident.

By the by, I muſt not omit to mention one fact with which I became acquainted at this time. I heard Mrs. Penelope talking to her niece of ſome one who had eſcaped ſeveral years before from the houſe of an uncle, and who had lived a life of great hardſhip as a ſervant, and had gone through a great deal of miſery, living under a feigned name, and being ſuppoſed to be dead in fact, as no clue to her exiſtence could be found, although a certain Archibald Sackville had on returning from a long ſojourn abroad made the moſt ſearching inquiries, at the ſame time taking every ſtep that could be taken to diſcover her.

(Well did I recollect old Giles' niece ſpeaking to me of "Archie," as ſhe called him.)

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Mrs. Penelope further ſaid that Archibald did at laſt diſcover her, and married her. By an old will of Giles' his property came to his niece, and the houſe in which he had lived being partly pulled down to be re-built, the treaſures under the floor were diſcovered, and proved to be of conſiderable value, in fact a very nice little fortune.

"So ho," thought I, "that is the beſt piece of news that has reached me for ſome time. Well indeed do I remember the perſons you ſpeak of, Mrs. Penelope, and—Hey ho, I am falling aſleep—good-bye—good night." I ſlept.

On awaking from a profound lethargy one day, I found I had again migrated to a new and different abode. The room I was in was very irregular in ſhape, a wide window with diamond panes was juſt oppoſite to me, and a tiny little one was at my ſide; at my back was a dreſſer of dark oak filled with homely looking earthenware. Above my head were ſuſpended a number of ſmoked hams, and ſome pieces of bacon. Over the mantelpiece, which was ſo high that there was ſcarcely half a yard between it and the ceiling, there hung a fowling-piece, a brace of piſtols, ſeveral pairs of ſpurs, and ſome bright ſteel articles which had a military appearance. The ceiling of this room was almoſt black from the wood ſmoke, for wood and peat were the only fuel uſed I found in the great wide open fireplace. On either ſide of the fire were oaken benches

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whoſe age I ſhould think might equal my own, but they were ſo blackened with ſmoke, that it was difficult to feel any certainty on this head. The floor of this room was of lime aſh, rather cold to the feet, and leſs agreeable than Perſian carpets, or even than the poliſhed oak to which once on a time I had been accuſtomed. Before the fire lay a fine ſpecimen of the true ſhepherd's dog, grey and grizzled, and two puppies of the ſame breed alſo, beſides a ſmall black terrier; a little roſy-faced fair-haired girl was ſtanding by another of about ſixteen, earneſtly obſerving how her ſiſter (the elder of the two) uſed her knitting-pins. The child had a piece of worſted knitting in her little fat hands, but evidently ſhe had not been getting on ſatisfactorily with it.

"Mary," ſaid a woman who came in from the further door, "you had better be looking ſharp, time's getting on."

"Yes, mother, I will," replied the girl addreſſed, and laying aſide her knitting, ſhe roſe to attend to her duties.

Theſe conſiſted I ſaw of arrangements for cooking ſupper, and ſhe and the little girl next laid out the table. A great big table it was which ſtood by the window. Firſt a cloth was laid, and then trenchers, and knives, ſpoons, and forks for ſix people. This having been done, a ſmall round table was drawn from the dark ſide of the room nearer to the light, and tea-things, and a couple of home-

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made loaves, one a huge brown one, and the other a ſmall white one, were placed upon it; and then the tea was made, and the farmer's wife (as I gueſſed her to be) and her daughters ſat down to it.

"Father's late," ſaid little Lizzy, "iſn't he, mother?"

"Yes, he is, rather; I don't know where he meant to go this afternoon."

"He ſaid he'd got to ſee after the men in Lower Denzel," ſaid her ſiſter Mary.

"Here he is," ſaid the mother, and Lizzy ran to meet him.

The farmer came in ſmiling at his little girl, and told her to get him his dry ſhoes, for he was well nigh wet through, he ſaid.

While he was ſitting in the chimney-corner changing his boots, I heard voices outſide, and then appeared on the threſhold three ladies. Two not grown up, and one ſome years older, who all came into the farm kitchen, and were welcomed with cordial ſmiles and curtſies by its inmates.

"Oh, but we are diſturbing you at your tea, Mrs. Hopkins," ſaid Miſs Buckley.

"No, ma'am, we had a'moſt done; we had, indeed."

"Well, but I am quite ſure Mr. Hopkins had not done; not even begun," ſaid one young lady.

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"No, ma'am, that's true; but if you'll excuſe him, Hopkins will take his tea while you are here, you know."

So after a little more converſation of this kind, an interchange of civilities, coupled with entreaties to remain on the part of Mrs. Hopkins, the ladies took their ſeats, and Hopkins his tea: Lizzy ſtanding, leaning againſt her father's knee, receiving tiny bits of his raſher of ham now and then with much ſatisfaction.

A great deal they all had to talk about,—country news, crops, ſheep and cattle, ponies, fowls, fruit, flowers, there was no end to the variety of ſubjects touched upon, and there I ſtood all the while unnoticed.

"A great loſs, old Dame Trotman," ſaid Mrs. Hopkins; "poor old lady, ſhe was ſoon gone after ſhe was once took ill."

"Yes, indeed," ſaid Miſs Buckley, "a nice old lady ſhe was; I ſhall miſs her very much when I walk to Barfield. I often ſat with her for half an hour either as I went or returned."

"My huſband went over to the ſale laſt Tueſday," ſaid Mrs. Hopkins; "we thought we'd like to have ſomething that had been hers, ſo he bought this here old chair," ſhe continued, and ſhe drew me a little forward. "'Tis a nice one though it is old; he bought this and a corner cupboard, they went together in a lot, and we are going to have the cupboard put up in yonder corner,

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'twill be very handy. It ſtood in the room ſhe ſat in, and many's the time ſhe's given the children little things out of it, bits of cake and ſuch like; and that little China cup which ſhe gave Mary,—the one you ſee on the ſhelf there,—that came out of it. It was the cupboard as we cared moſt for, only the two went together, you ſee, and it *is* a nice chair, I do think."

Miſs Buckley proceeded to look at me, and I began to feel my ſpirits raiſed ſomewhat by her evident intereſt in me. It was ſomething new for me to be talked of ſo ſlightingly, and looked upon with ſo little reſpect. I had been accuſtomed to very different ſociety, and a very different ſort of home to this farm-houſe; not that I did not think well of the honeſt farmer and his family, but they were not the ſort of aſſociates I had been accuſtomed to.

I have no idea who Dame Trotman was. I had been many years in a ſtate of ſomnambuliſm, I believe, and now I had awaked to find my poſition in the world terribly lowered. Calm reflection however ſoon made me feel aſhamed of my diſcontent, and I determined ever to treaſure the recollection of bygone days, but not to mar thoſe recollections by fooliſh regrets.

My reflections were interrupted by the entrance of ſome three or four fine burly labourers, and two or three boys. They came ſhyly in, making bows to the ladies, and proceeded to take their places at the ſupper-table.

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The ladies roſe almoſt immediately, and wiſhing every one good evening, left, ſaying they muſt make haſte, or they ſhould be late for dinner.

The elder of the two young ſiſters had been obſerving me a good deal while ſitting in the farm-kitchen, and more than once ſhe had got up from her ſeat to look at me more carefully. My date was not loſt upon her, I ſaw, and I heard her ſay to Mary Hopkins,

"I ſhould like to ſee it (meaning me) well rubbed up; you ſee there is an inlaid pattern of lighter wood in the back, which, if well poliſhed, would have a very good effect. I wonder what the hiſtory of the old chair is? I wonder where it has been all its days?" And then ſhe fell to muſing—over me doubtleſs.

When they were gone, the buſineſs of giving the hungry farm-labourers their ſupper was attended to. They thoroughly underſtood how to enjoy it, I obſerved. Moſt excellent fare it appeared to be, and capital was the cider they drank with it I fancy.

I heard Mary tell her mother, ſhe thought when they baked next day, a brown loaf muſt be made for the young ladies, as they had told her they liked nothing ſo well as the real farm-houſe brown bread.

"Now that is odd," ſaid Mrs. Hopkins; "it is ſo contrary, as you may ſay. I believe becauſe they ain't

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forced to eat it, they like it. I think brown is not to be named with white."

"You ſee, mother, it's a change," ſaid Mary, "ten to one if they'd like it for a whole month."

"I ſay, Molly," ſaid Farmer Hopkins, "hand over th' ould chair; let's try 'un. Poor ould lady!" ſoliloquiſed he to himſelf as he looked me over, (referring, I believe, to Dame Trotman, not to me, reader, though I have been miſtaken for a lady,) then he tried whether my ſtyle ſuited him; and I ſuppoſe his opinion was a favourable one, as he was very ſoon ſnoring.

The labourers went out one by one to their homes, and the farm-boys went up to the loft where they ſlept; Mrs. Hopkins went to put Lizzie to bed, and Mary ſat down to her knitting.

The colour came brightly to her cheek as the latch was lifted, and a young man entered. Seeing the farmer faſt aſleep, he did not diſturb him, but ſlipping into a chair by Mary's ſide, he ſeemed to find the time paſs quite ſufficiently pleaſantly in converſing with her.

By-and-by Mrs. Hopkins returned, and welcomed the ſtranger very cordially.

"It's quite a long time, Mr. Parke, ſince you've been up to the farm," ſhe ſaid.

"Yes, it is, Mrs. Hopkins," replied he, "but you ſee, we've had ſo much company in the houſe, that I have

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not had a minute to ſpare. We have had ſomething of a dinner-party every day this week, and to-night even we had the architect for the new church and two other gentlemen, and I hardly knew how to get away; but I told James I muſt have an hour to-night, ſo as ſoon as we had taken in the tea, I was off, for I wanted to ſee you, Mrs. Hopkins."

"Me, did you? Well, I'm ſure I'm always glad to ſee *you*, Mr. Parke; nothing very particular, I ſuppoſe, is it?"

"No,—oh, no, ma'am, only—I thought you might like to hear about the church. I can give you a few particulars, becauſe I have, you ſee, heard ſeveral things when there's been diſcuſſions at dinner, which might not happen to have reached your ears."

"Hollo! How are you, Parke?" ſaid the farmer, ſuddenly waking up. "Why, when did you come in?—I never heard yer."

"You were aſleep, ſir, ſo I took care to be quiet."

"Oh, you did, well, it was very kind of you; now tell us ſome news then."

Parke did his beſt, and among other things, he ſaid he believed all the arrangements for reſtoring the old pariſh church were now completed, and that it was to be begun forthwith.

This news ſeemed to pleaſe the farmer and his family

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very much. The farmer ſaid he was very glad the old church in which the forefathers of the pariſh had worſhipped for hundreds of years, where they had liſtened to the Scriptures, and knelt in united prayer, was to be made more worthy of Him to Whoſe honour and glory it was dedicated.

While the farmer was talking on about the reſtoration, I fancied Parke whiſpered ſomething to Mary about the new church being ready for the banns. "Whoſe banns? and what are banns?" thought I. Mary however had made no reply, only ſhe had a prettier colour on her cheek than I had before obſerved, which I could in no other way account for, than by ſuppoſing *banns* were an article of ſome ſpecial intereſt to her.

Parke ſtayed nearly an hour, and ran off in a great hurry at laſt, without ſo much as even *looking* at me. I liked his countenance very much, and this made me wiſh he had been friendly enough to notice me. "However, we ſhall meet again, I fancy," ſaid I to myſelf, "and ſhall be introduced, no doubt."

A very buſy life was that led by all the inhabitants of this farm. The farmer was bailiff, I found, to Mr. Buckley, the father of the two girls whom I had ſeen with their aunt the firſt day of my awaking from my long torpor. Very early in the morning the Hopkins family were aſtir; there was breakfaſt to prepare for the houſe-

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hold; milking, feeding of pigs and poultry; dairy work, including ſcalding the cream, as it is called in the ſouth-weſt of England; butter-making from the ſcalded cream, preparations for going to market twice a week, when the beautiful yellow butter had to be packed in baſkets; preparing food for pigs, and a variety of different occupations, leaving very little time for leiſure between morning and evening. Health and good-temper however made the hours paſs merrily as well as buſily, and I began to feel more and more at home among my new friends.

Mary managed to find the opportunity ſeveral times to give me a fine poliſhing, and, thanks to her ſtrong young arms, my appearance was, I have no doubt, improving.

"There," ſhe ſaid one day, as ſhe ſat down quite out of breath, after working away at me for half an hour, "if Miſs Buckley ſees no difference in you now, you old fellow, ſhe muſt be blind."

It was not many days after this that Miſs Buckley and her nieces again arrived at the farm, and immediately after the firſt greetings had paſſed, her eye fell upon me.

"Oh!" ſhe exclaimed, "you *have* worked a change; how nice it looks. Why, Mary, is this all your doing?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mary, "I'm glad you think it's better."

"Moſt wonderfully improved. It is really quite a

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handſome piece of furniture now, and how curious this pattern of inlaid wood—"

"I wonder who cut thoſe figures," ſaid the youngeſt little girl, (whoſe name by the by was Milicent.)

"Yes, I wonder who did it," ſaid her ſiſter Lucy; "it was the year Cromwell died."

"Pleaſe, miſs, was that the man who cut the king's head off?" aſked Mary Hopkins.

"Well, he was the chief cauſe of that terrible deed," ſaid Miſs Buckley.

I could remember thoſe figures being cut, and I could have told them who cut them, but having reſolved to publiſh my memoirs, I left all explanations for a future occaſion.

More was ſaid about the reſtoration of the old church, which ſeemed to be a ſubject full of intereſt to all the pariſh.

A pedlar came to the door juſt after the ladies left, and he was allowed to come in and diſplay his tempting wares. Little Tom Hopkins bought a knife from him, which he had the impudence to try upon me! and was caught in the act of cutting a notch in my left hind leg; for which *unwarrantable* act he received a box on the ear.

"Not more than you deſerve, ſir," thought I, "where are your manners, eh?"

I remember a little incident which happened during

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the ſummer of that year, which I ſhall mention. It was hay harveſt time, Mr. Hopkins and all the men of the farm, and many more hired labourers, were buſily engaged in getting in the ſweet ſmelling crops.

I heard the farmer one morning promiſe little Lizzy a ride on the great grey mare, which went in the ſhafts, and alſo one on the hay waggon itſelf, and ſhe was to go with Mary to the field at four o'clock, when Mary was to take ſome tea and bread and butter to her father and the labourers belonging to the farm. So off they ſet at half-paſt three.

At ſeven o'clock Farmer Hopkins returned, and ſoon after Mary and her couſin Rebecca came in. Then came Tom, and then I heard the farm men and boys in the yard, and I heard the waggons and the teams alſo returning.

Hopkins took me for his ſeat, and he began telling his wife how well the hay had been ſaved in the great ten-acre field.

Well, time went on, and at laſt Tom ſaid,

"Mother, where's Lizzy?"

"Lizzy?" ſaid Mrs. Hopkins; "why, where was ſhe when you came in?"

"I don't know; I thought ſhe came in long afore me."

"But I've never ſeen her! Bleſs the child, what can ſhe be after? Go and look for her, Tom."

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So Tom went, and I heard him calling, "Lizzy, Lizzy," all about the place.

"Why, where ever can ſhe be?" ſaid Mrs. Hopkins at laſt. And Tom returned ſaying he could nowhere diſcover her.

Then I ſaw the faces of all the party begin to look a little anxious. Hopkins roſe and went to the door, and called to the labourers to know if they had ſeen Lizzie. They all ſaid not ſince ſhe was in the field ſome hours before, they thought ſhe had run home to her mother.

Mary ſaid ſhe left her playing with Tom when ſhe went to aſk her Couſin Rebecca to come to tea. Tom ſaid he had miſſed her, and had fancied ſhe had gone home.

So then ſearch was to be made. Hopkins ſtarted off to the "Ten Acres" with Jacob Brewer, and another man. Mary and Rebecca went out too. An hour went by, and Mrs. Hopkins got ſo anxious that I thought ſhe would go alſo. She went many times acroſs the yard to look out, but ſhe had ſprained her ankle, and it pained her in walking.

At laſt a man came running in. "Is ſhe here, ma'am?" he aſked.

Mrs. Hopkins ſaid, "No," and the man ſaid he had run in to aſk, thinking ſhe might have returned while they were looking for her.

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It was fast getting dark, and there was no moon; Mrs. Hopkins was crying, and the servant girl Jane was wiping her eyes. I heard a sound, and in a minute in ran old Moll the sheep dog; he went up to Mrs. Hopkins, laid his nose in her lap, and then ran out again, but instantly returned, and then she went to the door. Only a few minutes more, and Hopkins entered with little Lizzie in his arms, followed by the rest of the party.

The story was soon told. She had felt very sleepy, she said, so finding a nice heap of hay in a ditch by the side of the field, she had made a bed for herself, and Moll and Tim, another old dog, and a pet dog of hers, and she had fallen so fast asleep, that she did not wake when the dogs left her to go home with their master and the rest.

It occurred to her father, after a long search, to make the dogs find her, so he took hold of Moll, and said, "Lizzie, Lizzie,—hie, over there,—fetch her." Whereupon Moll started off, and the seekers followed, and the good old dog led them straight to the spot where the child lay still fast asleep.

One wintry day, some months after this, I heard Jane, who was standing over a wash-tub in the back kitchen, say,

"Lor, ma'am, here's the ladies coming, they seem never to mind the weather."

"Well, no, I don't think they do for that matter," re-

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plied her miſtreſs. "Hand me over a cloth, Jane, ſo as I may wipe off the duſt a bit afore they come in."

Jane handed over the duſter, and I got a rub over as well as the reſt of the chairs.

In came the ladies, their gowns tucked up, and their boots protected by galoſhes, which they were careful to leave outſide the door. They ſaid the mud was ſo thick in ſome places, that they had walked through it with difficulty, but that they wanted particularly to ſee Mrs. Hopkins. And then Miſs Buckley told her that they had a plan for putting a new pulpit into the church, for that the old one was really ſo worm-eaten, and altogether ſuch a miſerable ſhabby thing of the kind, that it was not fit for its poſition in the newly reſtored church. The plan ſhe propoſed was that of raiſing a ſubſcription in the pariſh, and ſo enabling each perſon, rich or poor, to contribute ſomething. And Miſs Buckley ſaid ſhe thought it would be a pleaſure to all to feel that they had been inſtrumental in placing a handſome pulpit in their newly reſtored pariſh church.

Mrs. Hopkins quite agreed to this, and after a little more talking, ſhe dropped half-a-crown into the purſe held by the little Miſs Buckley, and Miſs Lucy put her name down in the liſt of contributors.

"Pleaſe, ma'am," ſaid Jane, who had been liſtening to all that went on, though her hands were ſtill buſy in the

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ſoap ſuds, "would you take a trifle from me? I can't afford much."

"Moſt willingly, Jane, but you muſt not talk of it as if you were giving it to *me*. We are all joining together in this matter, and all have the privilege of uniting to make this offering. The offering of a cheerful and willing giver is accepted, not according to the amount given, but according to the good will with which it is given."

Jane had pulled a leathern purſe from her pocket, and ſhe put a fourpenny piece into the purſe which little Milicent held, ſmiling at Miſs Buckley as ſhe did ſo, as much as to ſay, "Many thanks for your words, ma'am."

Mrs. Hopkins inquired whether the ladies had been to any other houſes collecting, and Miſs Buckley told her they had been to many.

"See how heavy the purſe is!" ſaid little Miſs Milicent, "only juſt feel it, Mrs. Hopkins."

"Lor! well, to be ſure, it is a weight! why it's too much for you to carry, miſs!"

Mrs. Hopkins brought out her brown bread, and inſiſted on giving each of the ladies a piece of bread and cream, for ſhe was ſure they muſt be hungry, ſhe ſaid, and ſo I fancy they were. They ſaid they had to go half round the pariſh before they returned home, as they were anxious to get over their taſk as quickly as poſſible.

I fell into a torpor after this, which laſted until the

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following ſpring, and awoke from my lethargy, to find myſelf no longer in the farm kitchen, and my readers will not perhaps be ſurpriſed to hear, that it was with ſome regret that I made the diſcovery.

"Hollo! hollo!" ſaid I to myſelf, "why, what's all this?"

My aſtoniſhment was conſiderable, as you may ſurmiſe from this exclamation. Reader, I was ſtanding in a room, which was furniſhed with much taſte and elegance, and oppoſite to me was a long pier glaſs, which reached from the floor to the ceiling, and there was I, reflected as large as life!

Now, I had once before caught ſight of myſelf in a mirror, but I looked ſo ſmall on that occaſion, that I took little notice of my appearance. *Now*, however, it was very different, and, don't accuſe me of *vanity*, kind reader, if I juſt mention that I was *pleaſed* with my form and general aſpect. "Rubbed up" I had often been, but ſurely my ſurface never ſhone with ſuch a ſmooth, brilliant poliſh as it now did. The ſunlight played over me with evident delight, and made the colour of the crimſon velvet, with which a portion of each of my arms was covered, look lovely. Yes, reader, my arms had for the firſt time a beautiful piece of velvet upon each of them. Several ladies, among whom I recognized my friends, the Miſs Buckleys, were hard at work, making ſmall flat

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cuſhions of the ſame velvet, and talking away over their work as faſt as their tongues could go. I heard a vaſt deal about feſtoons, wreaths, evergreens, flowers, ladders, ſeats, the Biſhop, the veſtry, ſurplices, ſchool feaſts, &c., &c., &c. But my mind was ſo confuſed, that I could not make head or tail of it all, try as I might. Gradually my intellect cleared; (I'm always *very* ſtupid after a torpid interval,) and it became plain to me that ſome very important occaſion was at hand, and that I was a perſonage deſtined to play a very important part on this ſaid very important occaſion. But I could not divine what it was to be.

Time paſſed, during which I ſtood all day long in a corner, with a white ſheet over me. Not very entertaining this, as my readers may imagine.

"What on earth is the uſe of dreſſing me up in velvet, if the only conſequence is that I am not fit for the light of day, and am merely to perform the part of ghoſt in a corner?" thought I, "and not even ſo much as a hole in this provoking ſheet, that I may peep out and ſee who goes by, and—"

I was fearfully ſtartled at the moment by an unearthly ſcream, and a ruſh, followed by the banging of a door.

"Ah, that's it!" ſaid I, "ſome one is ſatisfied now, I ſuppoſe. Evidently I am thus habited to frighten the

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maids, and now that they *have* been frightened, I ſhall be releaſed, I hope."

Now I heard many voices, and much laughter too there was, and in came, I ſhould think, ſome dozen perſons. Theſe were ſervants for the moſt part, and then the voice of a lady explained that I was "*the old chair, and no ghoſt*," and then the maidſervant who had been ſo terrified a few minutes before, laughed, and cried, and ſaid ſhe never had been ſo frightened in her life, and after about ten minutes of merriment at her expenſe and mine, the whole ſet went off again, and left poor me alone.

I was in the depths of melancholy all that night, and was much ſtartled when morning came, by hearing the ſudden claſhing and clanging of a fine peal of bells. Had they tolled, it would have been more conſonant with my feelings. However, I rouſed myſelf and liſtened. Beautifully the bells were rung, change followed change with wonderful preciſion and correctneſs. The clock ſtruck eight, and ſteps approached.

"Here it is," ſaid a ſweet voice; "you muſt be very careful, Andrews, eſpecially of the arms, which are covered with velvet."

"Oh, yes, miſs, I'll be careful, *very* careful, I will be. Me and Johnſon will take it, you know, miſs, ſo it's *ſure* to go ſafe. Here, Johnſon, come in."

"And James, you may as well help too," ſaid the lady.

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"Oh, dear, am I not going to have my ſheet off now?" ſaid I. But ſheet and all I was lifted up, and placed upon ſome kind of raiſed platform, and away we went. I did feel ſo very ſad, I did hope at leaſt to have had *one* look about me, but that odious ſheet was tucked round me cloſer than ever. I was upon ſomething with wheels, which was moved along gently, and I was held by a ſtrong arm. We ſtopped at laſt, and I heard a man run down ſome ſteps followed by another, and then there was a colloquy. There ſtood I, wondering what it was all about, when violent hands were laid upon me, and uplifted by ſeveral ſtrong arms, I was carried up ſteps, and along a paſſage it ſeemed to me, and finally placed upon ſomething ſoft, which I gueſſed to be a thick carpet.

"Muſt we take off this here?" inquired a man.

"Well, I don't know, I'm ſure," replied another.

"We hadn't got no orders," ſaid the firſt.

"Oh, here's the parſon, he will know," ſaid one, and then I heard, "Pleaſe, ſir, are we to take off this here?"

"Eh? what, the covering? oh, yes, certainly, I want particularly to ſee how it looks!" and then off went the ſheet, and my delight was indeed great.

I heard "the parſon" ſay I looked extremely well, and one man ſaid with a ſmile, he thought them as I laſt belonged to, would ſcarce know me, &c., &c., but I was

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too much engaged to pay much attention to what they ſaid, and I looked about me with ſurpriſe and pleaſure.

I was in fact in a beautiful church, the very church, as I afterwards diſcovered, about which Miſs Buckley was ſo much intereſted, and on the ſubject of which I had heard ſo much converſation. Reader, *I* was the chair deſtined for the Biſhop's uſe on the day of conſecration, which was, in fact, the very day about which I now write. But I ſhall not enlarge upon the ceremonials of that day; ſuffice it to ſay, it was a very happy one, I believe, to the whole pariſh. Numbers of people there were; beautiful muſic too, and beautiful ſinging, but the newſpapers can tell you better than I can about all that.

I may, however, mention, that Farmer and Mrs. Hopkins and family, came to ſee me after the ſervice, and brought many of their friends into the chancel for the ſame purpoſe. The pulpit too was greatly admired and much obſerved upon. The ſubſcriptions had been liberal and the reſult was a very handſome piece of carved work. And now for many weeks and months, I continued to occupy a place in the reſtored and beautiful church of W——.

At length a period of torpor drew nigh into which I ſank, after hearing the words, "muſt be removed to give place to the remarkably handſome chairs, preſented by the Arch—" I heard no more.

Many months had paſſed, nay, I believe, years, when

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I again awoke, to find myſelf in a ſmall room, in which ſtood a table with writing materials upon it, a large, old-faſhioned cheſt, a cupboard, a bench, and a footſtool. There were alſo a few books.

This, reader, was the veſtry, and here it is I have written my memoirs. I found excellent paper, pens, and ink, at hand, and I determined to employ my time, in making known to my friends the hiſtory of my life. The curate, a very pleaſing young man, has moſt kindly offered to introduce my work to the publiſhing world; his ſiſter is my editor. And now as I am extremely tired, and beginning to feel the approach of another ſeaſon of torpor, though not, I truſt, of another tranſmigration, I haſten to bring my ſtory to a concluſion, wiſhing you all health, wealth and happineſs, and hoping that your days may paſs as agreeably as mine have done, and greatly pleaſed ſhall I be to learn that my literary labours have afforded you half-an-hour's amuſement on a wet or a ſnowy day, when you were precluded from enjoyment out of doors.

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